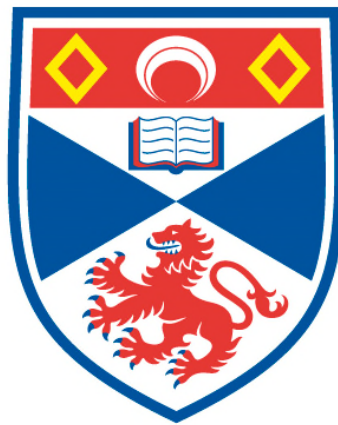


**THE PERPETUAL RETURN OF THE ANCESTORS  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF THE SOUTHERN TEPEHUAN  
OF MEXICO AND THEIR DEITIES**

**Jorge Antonio Reyes Valdez**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



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THE PERPETUAL RETURN OF THE ANCESTORS  
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF THE SOUTHERN TEPEHUAN OF  
MEXICO AND THEIR DEITIES

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University of  
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews

15/04/2015

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I, Jorge Antonio Reyes Valdez, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80.000 words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September, 2010 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in September, 2010; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2010 and 2015.

I, Jorge Antonio Reyes Valdez, received assistance in the writing of this thesis in respect of language, grammar, and syntax, which was provided by Linda Scott.

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## Abstract

This thesis is an ethnographic account of the different ritual domains of interaction between the O'dam of Northern Mexico and their gods. For the O'dam, also known as the Southern Tepehuan, gods, divinities, and different types of spirits have an ancestral character since they are considered as the original inhabitants of the world. It is possible to identify three groups of deities which the O'dam interact with within different ceremonial contexts. Firstly, there are the native ceremonial centres known as *xiotalh* patios, where the O'dam engage with the gods of agriculture, and hunt. Here, children are initiated in maize-eating, young men are initiated in deer hunting, and the kinship groups renew their vows with the gods of maize. Secondly, within the context of the church and the courthouse, the O'dam interact with the Christian deities through a complex organisation inherited from the Spanish *cofradías* and *cabildos*. This group of deities is associated with European activities such as breeding livestock, going to school, and participating in local politics. These relationships between the O'dam and the Christian deities are mainly reproduced by the participation in church festivals. And thirdly, in the domain of the forest the O'dam conduct retreats during five weeks in which they interact with deities and spirits associated with different types of diseases. Since this is the context of shamanic initiation, it is here that individuals learn how to master the spirits responsible for inflicting illnesses, emerging from the retreats with stronger souls which are more resilient to harm. In this work, I approach these three different domains of interaction between the O'dam and their deities from the perspective of ceremonial leaders and shamans, as well as from the perspective of what can be defined as an 'ordinary person'.

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## Note in South-eastern Tepehuan orthography and phonology

Manne r of Articulation	Place of Articulation				
	Bi labial	Al veolar	Alv eo-palatal	Vel ar	Gl otal
Stop voiceless	p [p]	t [t]		k [k]	' [ʔ]
Stop voiced	bh [b]	d [d]		g [g]	
Fricative	b [β]	s [s]	x [ʃ]		j [h]
Affricate voiceless			ch [tʃ]		
Affricate voiced			dh [dʒ]		
Nasal	m [m]	n [n]	ñ [ɲ]		
Liquid		r [ɾ]	lh [ɣʎ]		
Glide			y [j]		

Table 1 Consonants in South-eastern Tepehuan

	FRONT	CENTRAL	BACK
HIGH	I [I]	ɨ [ɨ]	U [U]
MID	E [E]	ɛ [ɛ]	O [O]
LOW		A [ɑ]	

Table 2 Vowels in South-eastern Tepehuan

## Introduction

'To be O'dam is really hard, it is a lot of work, this was the way the Gods left it, and they left you [*mestizos*] a different way; the gods are Our Parents, they granted us life'. This is something the O'dam frequently told me over the years. Through these words, the O'dam mean they have an 'original debt' with the deities which has to be paid through *el costumbre*, a set of ceremonies that are celebrated to please the gods and keep the relationship on good terms. This relation is never easy, and as the O'dam state it is, indeed, 'a lot of work'. The gods have wide expectations of O'dam people. Nevertheless, these expectations are not easy to fulfil and human failures provoke penalties which lead to illness and death. Conversely, to be on good terms in a balanced relationship with the gods can bring good health and a prosperous long life. However, this balanced relationship, even if possible, is fragile and easy to break. Besides the 'original debt of life', people acquire new obligations to the gods by asking for favours, which results in a life of an unfinished chain of debts which finally drives people to death. For this reason, and as I present here: for the O'dam there is no such thing as a 'death of natural causes' and all deaths are attributed to either human failure in the eyes of the gods or as the result of witchcraft. This dissertation is an ethnographic account of the different scopes of interaction between the O'dam from northern Mexico and their deified ancestors, the gods.

### THE O'DAM OF NORTHERN MEXICO

The O'dam and Au'dam people are better known in anthropological literature as the Southern Tepehuan. They are part of the Tepiman branch of the Uto-Aztecan language group which spread along a portion of the American Southwest and Northwest Mexico (Miller 1983). The Southern Tepehuan (O'dam and Au'dam), Huichol (Wixaritari), Cora (Nayeri) and Mexicanero (Nahua) incorporate the historical-cultural region known as Gran Nayar, which includes parts of the states of Durango, Nayarit, Jalisco and Zacatecas. This

region is mainly defined by a long shared history and common cultural practices (Jáuregui 2008).<sup>1</sup> They are referred to as the 'Southern' Tepehuan to differentiate them from an indigenous group living to the north also called the Tepehuan (Ódami) mainly located in southern Chihuahua and known in the literature as Northern Tepehuan (Reyes 2006b: 5). The similarities between these groups are related languages and historical links and nowadays they are separated by approximately 500Km thus are more closely connected culturally to their respective neighbours (Reyes 2004). O'dam and Au'dam are the two dialects of the Southern Tepehuan language, also known as Southeastern and Southwestern Tepehuan, respectively (Shaul 2000).<sup>2</sup> Both dialects are geographically separated by the Mezquital River, which traverses the area.<sup>3</sup>



**Map 1 Indigenous Areas in Northern Mexico (based on Boege 2008: 78)**

<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s the Mexican state named this region by using the acronym HUCOT (Huichol-Cora-Tepehuan) for administrative purposes (Secretaría de Recursos Recursos Hidráulicos, et al. 1966).

<sup>2</sup> Some information points to a third dialect among the Southern Tepehuan (Cf. Ambriz 2002). In the community of Santa María Magdalena Taxicaringa, the inhabitants speak Au'dam, as in the South-western case, but they also declare that their language is more compatible with the South-eastern variation, the O'dam.

<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the community of Taxicaringa, Au'dam speakers, are located on the eastern side of the river alongside O'dam communities.

In 2005 the Mexican State official census recognised 24,418 Southern Tepehuan speakers over five years old (INEGI 2005).<sup>4</sup> The Southern Tepehuan people live in hundreds of small, scattered settlements in the low and highlands of the Sierra Madre Occidental, with altitudes ranging from 400m to 3,450m above sea level, providing a wide climatic variety as well as diverse flora and fauna. In the highlands there is a dominant presence of pine and oak forest while in the lowlands different types of shrubs, grasses, and cacti dominate the landscape.

The Southern Tepehuan settlements are grouped into seven big communities in southern Durango and northern Nayarit (Reyes 2006b: 15). By communities or *comunidades*, the Southern Tepehuan mainly refer to the collective land holding unit, originally titled to Indians in the colonial period and later validated by the Mexican state as a result of the agrarian reformation in the mid-20th century. These communities are social, political, and ritual unities, independent from one another. All their inhabitants are recognised as *comuneros*, community members, which grants land-rights regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.<sup>5</sup> This is the sense of community I use in the rest of this work. The administrative centre of each community is known as the *cabecera comunal*, or *pueblo-cabecera*, the head town. Head towns are normally recognised by their O'dam or Au'dam place-names. Additionally they have a Spanish or Spanish-Nahua name, which is simultaneously used by the state to legally recognise the whole community. There are seven Southern Tepehuan communities within this character:<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> This is the language criteria used by the Mexican state to acknowledge indigenous populations. In 2010, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI 2010) reported 35,873 Tepehuan speakers, but they do not make a distinction between the Northern and Southern Tepehuan which, conversely, the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI 2008) recognises as different since they are not mutually intelligible.

<sup>5</sup> However, unless an outsider married a Tepehuan *comunero*, there is no way to gain access or inherit this community's land. People working for State agencies remain in the community as long as the job demands, and normally inhabit a building especially arranged and designated with the communal authorities for this purpose. Inter-ethnic marriages, when they occur, are more common with other indigenous groups in the region.

<sup>6</sup> Before the agrarian reformation, Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle was two communities, Santa María de Ocotán, on one hand, and San José Xoconoxtle, on the other. It is unclear why they were reunited as one single community, but today, the *comuneros* from Xoconoxtle reclaim their right to be a different agrarian community (Reyes 2006a: 40).



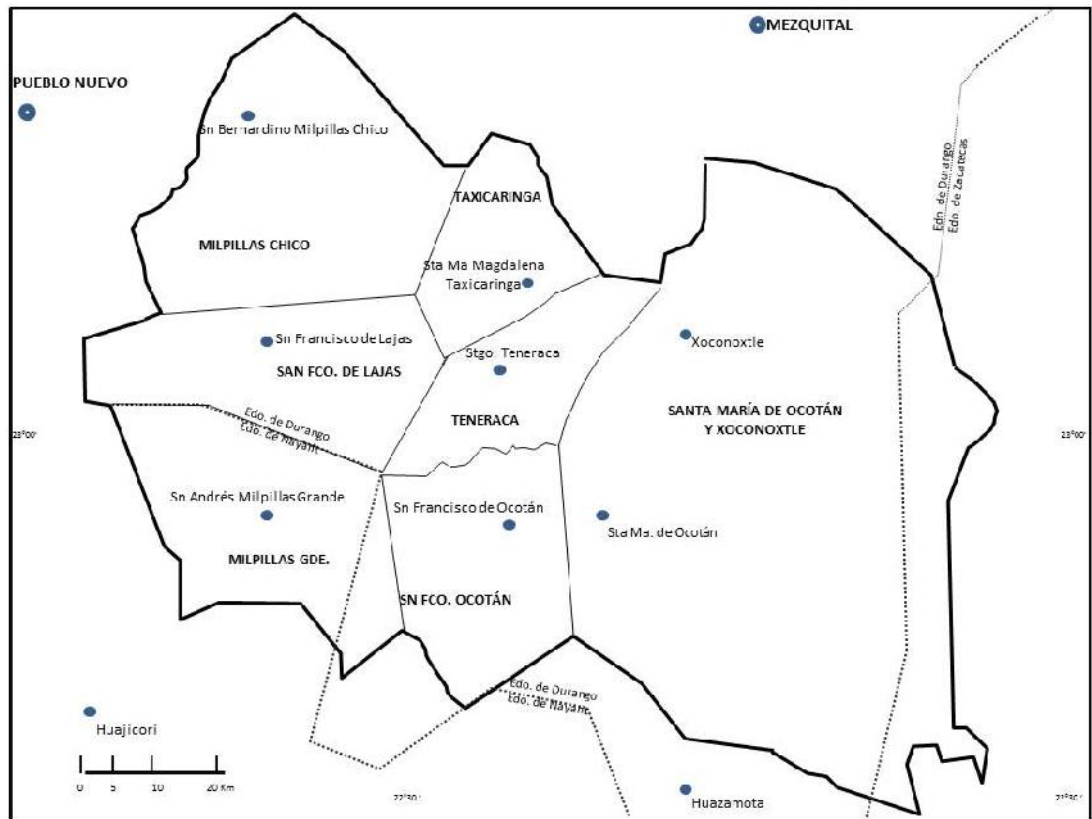
Community	Head town	Land Extension in Hectares (ha)	Municipality	Linguistic Variation
Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle	Juktir	421,139	Mezquital	O'dam
Santiago Teneraca	Chianarkam	100,224.78	Mezquital	O'dam
San Francisco de Ocotán	Kauxbilhim	78,810.91	Mezquital	O'dam/Au'dam
Santa María Magdalena Taxicaringa	Miiñ'cham	78,850.18	Mezquital	Au'dam (more compatible with O'dam)
San Bernardino de Milpillas Chico	Mua'lhim	159,925.53	Pueblo Nuevo	Au'dam
San Francisco de Lajas	Aicha'm	94,770.80	Pueblo Nuevo	Au'dam
San Andrés Milpillas Grande	NA <sup>7</sup>	80,900	Huajicori	Au'dam

**Table 3 Sothern Tepehuan Communities (Reyes 2013a: 280)**

For example, San Francisco de Ocotán is the name of the head town of the community with the same Spanish name. It has an approximate extension of 78,810.91ha, and hundreds of small villages in this territory. Simultaneously, the head town is known by its indigenous name Koxbilhim in O'dam and Kauxbilhim in Au'dam.<sup>8</sup> In what follows, unless the opposite is indicated, in order to avoid confusion, I refer to the *cabeceras* using indigenous names, which is the specific place-name of that location, and I use the Spanish name to allude to the whole community in the terms explained above.

<sup>7</sup> There is no sign of an indigenous name for this village known by the Spanish name Pueblo Viejo, as reported by Lumholtz (1904 [1902]: 460) at the end of the 19th century.

<sup>8</sup> Here it is possible to find people who declare they speak one or other dialect. Nevertheless, many older Au'dam speakers here, affirm this is the language the former generation spoke. As it happens in many places, the O'dam from Santa María de Ocotán is displacing the local varieties, mainly because this is the dialect promoted by the State and used in course books and other school materials.



**Map 2 Southern Tepehuan Communities. Based on: Secretaría de Recursos Recursos Hidráulicos, et al. (1966: 113-114)**

As political unities, each community has its own body of authorities, known as *gobiernos tradicionales*, traditional governments, integrated by thirteen officers annually renovated with ‘civic-religious’ features. The *gobiernos tradicionales* are the highest authority in each community, with attributes of policemen and judges, and they represent the community before external entities such as the

Mexican state. Alongside this, each community has its own body of agrarian authorities, triennially renewed, in charge of land tenure affairs (Chapter 5). Each community is also a 'ritual community' with two major ceremonial centres in each *cabecera* with its own ceremonial calendar: the *xiotalh* or *mitote* patio and the courthouse-church.<sup>9</sup>

The *xiotalh* or the *mitote* centres (chapters 1 and 4) are ceremonial spaces where the O'dam, as well as the other indigenous groups in the Gran Nayar area (Jáuregui 2008; Reyes 2006a: 205-211), celebrate the maize agricultural cycle alongside individuals' life cycles. This follows a ceremonial calendar closely related to the different stages of the growing maize. Conversely, in the courthouse-church space, the *gobierno tradicional* officers are in charge of celebrating those Christian festivals which are also relevant to the reproduction of the system of authorities and related to European activities like stockbreeding, and more recently, the timber industry (chapters 2 and 5). Thereafter, head towns are mainly ceremonial centres which during the year do not concentrate very much population.<sup>10</sup> Only in recent decades, with the establishment of boarding schools and other instances of the Mexican state such as health clinics, these towns have grown and become more populated settlements. In regard to church celebrations, it is important to mention that with some exceptions, the Catholic priests do not have free access to the churches and need authorisation from the courthouse officers to do any type of activity, and it is extremely rare that they celebrate Mass (Chapter 2).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Exceptionally in Santa María de Ocotán de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle there are at least three ritual communities in the same agrarian community (the greatest in Mexico) with three ceremonial *cabeceras*: Santa María de Ocotán (Juktir), San José de Xoconoxtle (Nakaab tam), and Candelaria del Alto (Koba'ram), each has its own church and *xiotalh* patio (Reyes 2006a: 39).

<sup>10</sup> Although this information is questionable, the census (INEGI 2005) indicates that Chianarkam, the head town of Santiago Teneraca has 74 inhabitants

<sup>11</sup> In over 10 years I have witnessed only two Mass celebrations in the O'dam churches: The festival of Saint Joseph in 2006 in Xoconoxtle, and Holy Saturday in 2009 in Kauxbilhim. Even in San Bernardino Milpillas where Franciscan missionaries have a base, there are two churches and the missionaries only have free access to the 'new one' and require authorization from the courthouse officers to do anything in the 'ancient one'. (Cramausse 2013: 75).

The original research topic of this dissertation was 'the initiation and the learning processes among the Southern Tepehuan shamans [healers] of northern Mexico'. Two reasons led me to slightly change the topic, one practical and one theoretical. The practical reason is that these processes of learning are too long and complex to be studied as the object of a PhD dissertation. All the accomplished shamans that I met during my fieldwork stated that it takes at least 10 years to prepare. Furthermore, I had placed my expectations in the retreats where the novice healers conduct (Chapter 3) what I originally considered to be learning contexts, ignoring that the process involves a whole life-long experience which are mainly formalised by those periods of isolation. As a theoretical matter, I find it important to pay attention to the social contexts and the systems of thought and practice in which these shamans are embedded (Atkinson 1992: 315). If we take as the shaman's basic feature, to be 'intermediaries in man's relations with the world of spirits,' as Mikhaïlovskii (1892 cited in Hultkrantz 2007 [1993]: 7) earlier defined in the end of the 19th century, I realised that getting into a relationship with the spirits, the ancestors, and the gods, is an activity in which the shamans are specialists, but that otherwise, all the O'dam practice to different degrees and with different effects. Thus, the healers and other specialists have a privileged position and they are the masters in this domain. Considering such limitations, I discuss the learning processes of shamans and non-shamans in the Conclusion of Part I.

In this dissertation, I address the most important contexts of interaction between the O'dam and those non-human (many of them ex-humans), contexts which can be defined as ceremonial or ritual. I have divided the text into three scopes of interaction named the *xiotalh*, the church-courthouse, and the forest. In the first three chapters (Part I), I describe the 'non-initiated' or 'ordinary' people's position, while in the latter three (Part II) I approach the specialist perspective.

The majority of the information comes from Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle, and particularly from Juktir, the community and village that I know best and where I have done extensive fieldwork on other topics in the past. However, over the years I have managed to collect information from other

places, mainly San Francisco de Ocotán and Santiago Teneraca, which I include when available and relevant, and when it results in the benefit of a more accomplished account. With this, I also intend to contribute to the construction of a wider understanding of the Southern Tepehuan, avoiding a simplistic image, based on only one particular case. Along these lines, I keep the term O'dam over Southern Tepehuan, given that the inhabitants in these three communities are mainly O'dam speakers and refer to themselves as O'dam people. In the same way, I keep the O'dam place-naming unless it is particularly relevant to use Spanish names, which are usually the intention of a literal translation. In the final conclusion, I discuss the meanings of 'being O'dam' as humanity in relation to the alterity of other humanities and the gods and other beings.<sup>12</sup>

In the following pages, I describe the different ways that O'dam people follow through ritual actions in order to have a certain type of contact and hold particular relations with what they generically call 'los dioses', the gods or *los patrones*, the patrons (from patron saints). Referring to them as *los patrones*, the O'dam acknowledge their power, after all a '*patrón*' is someone who commands. They worship gods in the church (Christian) and on the *xiotalh* patio (natives), and there are many other gods that dwell in mountains, rocks, or rock shelters. With exception of the times when the O'dam talk about '*el Dios*' in singular, alluding either to Jesus Christ or to God 'Our Father' as an abstract and omnipotent character, it is common that they speak in plural about *los dioses*, the gods.

All the gods, as well as other beings inhabiting the world are ancestors, or better said 'ancestral', since they inhabited this world before the O'dam and other human beings, including Jesus and his apostles. These ancestors, as I explain in depth in the coming pages, became deities through upholding different abstinences, created the current world, founded the place of the first sunrise, and finally went to heaven. These are the beings that the O'dam call more concisely their ancestors, by the kinship term *jich gi'kora*', literally, our parents. Thus, in this work I use the terms gods, divinities, deities, and deified

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<sup>12</sup> My intention by the use of the term O'dam is no more than respect for their own use in their language. I am not suggesting a radical difference with the Au'dam, which in the state of the current research seems to be mainly linguistic, and even in that field our knowledge is still very basic.

ancestors, as equivalents, alluding all the time to those original inhabitants of this world, who by thoroughly undertaking the ritual abstinences cleansed themselves, left this world, and went to heaven and, to whom the O'dam acknowledge they owe their lives, their parents, their *gi'kora*'.<sup>13</sup>

However, there were many ancestors who did not manage to become deities and were petrified with the first sunrise or remained in the underworld. The specific character or features of many of these 'ancestral' beings are often ambiguous and their identity unknown. For instance, the Devil is a patron, but maybe, not a god, although there is room for hesitation.<sup>14</sup>

Among these 'ancestral' spirits there are also those qualified as '*dagim*', which can be translated as the 'lord of' or the 'lady of', and considered closer to humans than the *gi'kora*'. As an example, there is Alhi Dagim Jich Chat, identified with Saint Joseph, the lord responsible for sending children to the human world and for receiving their souls in heaven when they die. There is as well Muki dagim, 'the Lord of Dead' is closer to humans than Saint Peter our Father, after all, it is possible to bring back the souls of the deceased from the Place of Death (Chapter 6), but not from heaven once they have departed there. The category *dagim* includes those lords or spirits responsible for inflicting illness with whom the healers must negotiate in order to restore health to their patients. These are also ancestral beings, but they are not O'dam descendants, although many constantly try to make the O'dam affine, often successfully causing them to die. Last but not least, in this realm of invisible beings (under ordinary conditions) there are the souls of the deceased (*kokkoi*) which are clearly ex-humans in transit from the dark realm of death to heaven, which is the realm of the shining celestial beings. It is important to mention that this classification is one of the main outcomes of this dissertation, and that it becomes clear as a result of analysing the different scopes of interaction between humans and these beings, what I present in the forthcoming chapters.

It is possible to see, that this work has been influenced by the recent discussions in Mexican academia in the field of indigenous cosmology. These

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<sup>13</sup> As Viveiros de Castro (1992: 65,-67, 343) argues (following Lienhardt and Hocart), calling them gods 'allows us to measure the distance separating humans from Divinity', furthermore, the Indo-European 'god', *deivos* connotes celestial and shining beings as with the Araweté (Viveiros de Castro 1992: 344) and the O'dam.

<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, there are stories which grant God and the Devil the character of brothers; however, these characters are far more than their Christian features.

are in turn inspired by the contributions of Amazonian anthropology, which have focused on questions about the relation nature-culture, humanity, alterity, and the construction of the body-soul, mainly represented by authors such as Philippe Descola, Anne Christine Taylor, Aparecida Vilaça, Carlo Severi, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, among others. Their influence has enabled Mexican anthropology to move from a perspective on indigenous cosmology, which was productive during the 1980s and 1990s, and led by the influential work of Alfredo López Austin,<sup>15</sup> but which many specialist started considering as rigid, monolithic, self-enclosed, romantic, but above all canonical (Cf. Neurath 2008a: 29). I do not pretend to become 'perspectivist' or 'ontologist', but this academic dialogue has become beneficial in order to explain the various ethnographic details otherwise considered odd or as deviances, since they do not fit well with dominant models.<sup>16</sup>

In the field of ritual analysis, this Mexican ethnography is also pragmatic, moving from a symbolist anthropology, which searches the hidden meaning of ritual actions to assume there are no intrinsic meanings in ritual acts (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 5), and to analyse the complex social relations that people produce and reproduce through rituals: these social practices entail their own transmission (Kindl and Neurath 2008). My intention here is not to produce a theory of Tepehuan rituals, but ritual contexts and ritual actions constitute the centre of my ethnography. As Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994: 3-5) suggest, ritual is a quality of actions and not a class of events. Ritualised actions are different because of a specific attitude to their agent's purposes, and-actions. Even when it is possible to find distinctive ritual features in 'every day' situations, transforming these into ritualised actions, is in the scope of the ceremonial contexts described in the forthcoming pages, along with many others that I do not approach here, where the O'dam openly have and display the 'intentions' of relations with the gods in a particular way, actualising and reinforcing that relationship.

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<sup>15</sup> Descola (2012) bases his appreciation of the Mexican cases on López Austin (1988), leading him to consider Mexican indigenous ontologies as analogist (Cf. Neurath 2011a: 22).

<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, indigenous people in Mexico are very much considered as 'vestiges' of the ancient Mexicans and their ethnography often ends up validating, or not, information from historical and archaeological records (Galinier 2004: 9; Neurath 2007 and 2008a; Pitarch 2008).

The investigations among the Southern Tepehuan have benefited in the last fifteen years from the regional research perspective in the Gran Nayar area, through the constant comparison with other cases in the region, as Preuss (1998 [1908]: 267) suggested more than a century ago. My former work (Reyes 2006a) about the communal *xiotalh* in Santa María de Ocotán testifies to the efficiency of the method. My interpretations about this ceremony would be lacking without looking to the ethnography of the Huichol, the Cora, and the Mexicanero, which are otherwise widely developed. This method was productive in discussing general processes such as the ritual calendars, all of which are based on the common ground of maize agriculture and the changing seasons. Furthermore, at the time of publication, the published ethnographic sources regarding the Southern Tepehuan numbered no more than ten (Reyes 2006a: 16-24), and a further ethnographic example was based on four months fieldwork in the Southern Tepehuan and the Mexicanero communities (Sánchez 1980: 10). Consequently, ethnographic knowledge about the Southern Tepehuan, including my own research, was no less than superficial and the regional comparison offered a good way of understanding the Southern Tepehuan case. In this work I keep a dialogue with the investigations developed in the Gran Nayar area, especially those among the Huichol. However, one of my main goals in this dissertation is to understand O'dam practices from their own explanations and concepts in the first place, and resort to the ethnography of the Huichol, the Cora, and the Mexicanero, to reinforce my arguments or to illuminate the nooks and crannies that have remained in darkness. This will prove productive in the future, by once again engaging in a regional discussion by considering the results of this work. After all, if the O'dam consider other indigenous people from the Gran Nayar area among their own ancestors, I see no problem with acknowledging their ethnographers as my own scholarly ancestors, in a sense.



## Chapter 1

### The maize family: descendant and alliance

-Who is going with him? - Asked the mother.  
-I am going- replied the blue corn-  
-No, not you, your eyes are blue and you will look ridiculous. They will laugh about you. Who is going with him? - Asked the mother again.  
-I am going- replied the amaranth.  
No, not you, your eyes are too small and they will laugh about you- the mother said and she asked again, -who is going with him?  
-I am going- replied the gourd-  
-No, not you, because your blanket is ripped-.  
Finally, the white corn replied, -I am going with him-, and the girl went with him.

'The story of maize', Trinidad Morales, Juktir, July, 2010<sup>17</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

After witnessing the ceremony many times over many years, I found myself sitting on the ground before the altar, between two children and another man in his mid-twenties. We, the older ones, were called 'little children', while the two children, about ten years old were 'older' than us, since they had received the corn some years before. For one of my *compadres* it was huge and disconcerting to know that I was going to receive the corn on the ceremonial patio because, 'you are not O'dam', he said. However my family in Juktir had no hesitation, given we had got along together for over ten years.

Maize agriculture, and the ritual practices associated with it, reifies a kinship relationship between the O'dam and 'the corn family', which entails relations of affinity and descent. These ritual practices work in opposite directions simultaneously: they ratify kinship relations between humans and

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<sup>17</sup> My gratitude goes to Selene Galindo for her assistance in the translation from O'dam into both Spanish and English.

corn, and at the same time separate the one from the other, in order to make maize edible for humans.

The mythological accounts state that the first grower established a relationship of alliance with the corn family through his marriage to the corn-woman.<sup>18</sup> This man is often presented as a poor and hungry young man living with his mother and looking for food. He meets a woman (the earth) who has five daughters, each of them one of the five colour varieties of corn that O'dam people cultivate: white, yellow, blue (dark), red and spotted. In other versions, the white corn has four sisters: the bean, the *chilacayote* (*Cucurbita ficifolia*), the squash, and the amaranth (Benítez 1980: 146-148; Reyes 2006a: 242-244; Reyes 2015b).<sup>19</sup> The man is given the white corn as a wife on the condition that he treats her well, does not make her work too hard, and stays faithful to her. When the man returns to his mother's house, she is upset because he has come back with a woman instead of maize. Later, the young woman asks the man for a barn so she may sleep with him there. In the morning, after the couple slept there overnight, the barn is full of maize. On consecutive days the woman asks four more times for a barn, with the same results: each barn was filled with the different colours of maize - or with other 'maize sisters' according to other versions- appearing each time. One day the couple decide to celebrate a *xiotalh* to bless the young corn, and the man goes looking for flowers to offer at the altar. On his way back, he finds a woman who asks him for a flower. The man explains to her that the flowers are for the *xiotalh*. She insists and eventually he surrenders and has sexual intercourse with her. Once the man returns home, his wife asks him for the flowers and she notices that one is missing. The man offers an excuse, but his wife already knows the truth. Then, while she is dancing during the ceremony, she rises to heaven 'where she bloomed' and where she remains (Reyes 2006a: 242-244). By the end of the story, the man's mother takes a handful of ashes in an attempt to burn the thief who took the flower. But she only manages to smudge her face, and she is

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<sup>18</sup> Mythology about maize is very common throughout the Gran Nayar area. The earlier records correspond to Preuss (1998; 1982 [1969]) who documented this myth among the Huichol and Mexicanero, title 'the maize's wedding'; Mason (1914: 150-160) also documented a similar version among the Tepecano.

<sup>19</sup> In Mexico, amaranth (*A. cruentus* and *A. hypochondriacus*) is cultivated as a cereal and the grain is used to prepare a wide range of meals. For a deep analysis on this topic see *Amaranto: Ciencia y tecnología* (Espitia 2012).

recognised nowadays as the raccoon, one of the main raiders of corn. There is an alternate version of this story in which the man becomes wealthy and starts raising livestock, but he does not respect the agreement with his wife and gets drunk while shoeing and branding the animals.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE XIOTALH CEREMONY AND LIFE'S STAGES

Agriculture and the associated rituals imply a relationship of mutual perpetuation between humans and corn. In O'dam *jun* or maize (*Zea mays* L.) is a domesticated plant which does not grow in the wild. The maize depends on human hands to reproduce, while O'dam people subsist primarily through maize consumption. Botanical maize progenitors<sup>21</sup> - known in Spanish by the Nahuatl word *teocinte* (*Euchlaena mexicana*) - grow wild, and are identified by the O'dam as 'bastard' relatives cultivated by the 'lazy ones', namely the roadrunner, the crow, the quail, and the *komiilh* (a non-identified type of worm).

In this symbiotic relationship, both maize plants and people's life stages echo one another, as do 'technical' and 'ritual' actions.<sup>22</sup> As Neurath (2002: 294) observes among the Huichol 'the close relation between growers and crops entails a link between the agricultural ceremonies and the rituals of vital crisis.'<sup>23</sup> For maize, these stages are seed selection and sowing; the 'baby corn'; the maize on the cob; and the maize as a grain, which is also the seed again. Meanwhile human babies are gradually introduced to maize consumption when they are about a month of age, through tasting the baby corn;<sup>24</sup> later in the year

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<sup>20</sup> Huichol (Preuss 1998 [1907]: 161-163) and Tepecano (Mason 1914) versions emphasise the fact that the man's mother makes the young girl work too hard, grinding too much corn or burning the tortillas, which means the girl was hurting herself.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed account on the discussion about maize progenitors see Staller (2010: 85-147).

<sup>22</sup> Staller (2010: 85) defines symbiotic in this regard as a 'relationship among human populations, the local ecology, a mutualism or coevolution that is not necessarily dependent on human involvement, particularly with reference to resource management'.

<sup>23</sup> As Descola (2012: 28) describes for the Achuar from Ecuador, the technical know-how is inseparable from the ability to create an intersubjective ambiance in which regulated relations between one person and another flourish: relations between a hunter, animals, and the spirits that are the masters of hunted game; between the women, the garden plants, and the mythical figure that engendered the cultivated species and continues to ensure vitality to the present day.

<sup>24</sup> This is the ideal age. However, in practice it can vary depending on when the baby is born in relation to the ceremony. It can happen that a baby is born just after the ceremony has been celebrated and in that case the baby will wait until the next celebration the following year.

they are introduced to tasting corn on the cob; and finally to the maize when it has been ground into grain. Both maize and humans come together through ceremonies known as *xiotalh*, which mark the transitions between these stages.

The *xiotalh* (unknown etymology) are organized on two social levels: communal and kinship. While the former groups together people belonging to the same community, the kinship *xiotalh* groups together relatives who have the same paternal surname.<sup>25</sup> Women therefore still belong to their father's *xiotalh* after marriage, and must keep fulfilling their ritual duties there (Benítez 1980: 85; Reyes 2006a: 41; Cf. Riley 1969: 820). The *xiotalh* or *mitotes* (from Nahuatl 'to dance')<sup>26</sup> are performed in ceremonial centres located in the middle of the forest, known as *nii'kartam* (literally 'dancing place') or *xiotalh* patios, and are outdoor circular or quasi-circular plazas. Communal patios are known as *jich oo'ntam*, while kinship patios are called *alhi'ch* or small *nii'kartam*. During the ceremony, a bonfire is lit in the centre, and a temporary altar is assembled on the western side. It is very common, but not a rule, that they also have a kitchen under a simple roof made from foliage, on the west side of the ceremonial space. Each *nii'kartam*, at any organizational level, has its own group of ceremonial leaders, of whom at least two are male, - the *jix o'dagim* (in communal *xiotalh*) or *kikam* (in kinship *xiotalh*), and the *umuagim*- and one is a female named *tua'dam* (Chapter 4).

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<sup>25</sup> For an extensive study of the communal *xiotalh* see Reyes (2006a).

<sup>26</sup> *Mitote* is the word that O'dam people use when speaking Spanish. This word is also used by the Huichol, the Cora, and the Mexicanero to generically refer to their equivalent ceremonies (Guzmán 2002; Neurath 2002; Preuss 1998 [1908]; Reyes 2006a).



**Image 1 The Communal *xiotalh* patio at Juktir**

The communal celebrations highlight the character of the local government officers as representatives of their community - integrated with multiple kinship groups - and the 'social contract' that it implies, since they act before the deities on behalf of the whole community. In this regard, they represent the original community's ancestors on their way to becoming deified ancestors or deities (Cf. Neurath 2008a; Reyes 2006a: 78-84; Chapter 4). Furthermore, the O'dam say that communal *xiotalh* act not only in their favour, but for the benefit of everyone, since it is thanks to the *xiotalh* ceremonies that it rains across Mexico and all around the world (Benítez 1980: 87). Communal *xiotalh* thus emphasise seasonal transitions (from the dry season to the rains and vice versa), while kinship ceremonies stress the transitions in the lives of people and the corn. As kinship *xiotalh* are therefore more relevant in understanding how individuals and kinship groups interact and crystallize their relationships with the deified maize and people's ancestors.<sup>27</sup>

There are, in general, three communal *xiotalh* celebrations with varying dates depending on agreement among the group members: one falls prior to the rainy season, a second prior to the harvest, and a third in January

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<sup>27</sup> I only mention the communal *xiotalh* in order to provide some background to better understand the kinship *xiotalh*.

associated with the New Year and the accession of new individuals to positions as communal authorities. Exceptionally in Juktir, they come together for a fourth celebration in the communal *xiotalh* on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, expressly for blessing the baby corn. However, this ceremony from which women are excluded is not considered a *xiotalh*, since it does not involve dancing. However there are only two *xiotalh* at the kinship level: one prior to the rainy season and one prior to the harvest. Once again the kinship *xiotalh* in the area of Juktir are an exception, since they celebrate a third ceremony around the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, replicating the one held on the communal patio on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August. In Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim, kinship groups assimilate this third celebration into to the harvest *xiotalh* during the young maize's (or 'corn on the cob') ceremony.

*Xiotalh* celebrations vary in length from one community to another and from one kinship group to another. The communal celebrations last five days,<sup>28</sup> and it is possible to have up to five consecutive *xiotalh*, which takes more than a month. Kinship *xiotalh*, on the other hand, can last from three to six days, with five and three day's duration being the most common (although I have also registered four days of celebration on some patios). The length is related to the particular tutelary ancestor or group of ancestors worshipped by the kinship group. During the ceremonies, male participants contribute corncobs at a particular stage of development at the time of the celebration. Every participant (male and female) contributes fresh firewood daily; and they pray aloud together in what they call in Spanish *la confesión* (the confession), at the beginning of the ceremony and, in some cases (mainly in communal *xiotalh*), every day at noon (Benítez 1980: 89-92). Through the confession all the participants address their wishes to the deities, apologizing for not venerating them as they deserve and for being 'sinners' by failing to hold to the necessary abstinences during previous celebrations (Reyes 2006a: 99). The confession is at once a collective and an individual prayer, since everybody does it at the same time, following the ceremonial leaders, but each in their own individual way. During one of the first

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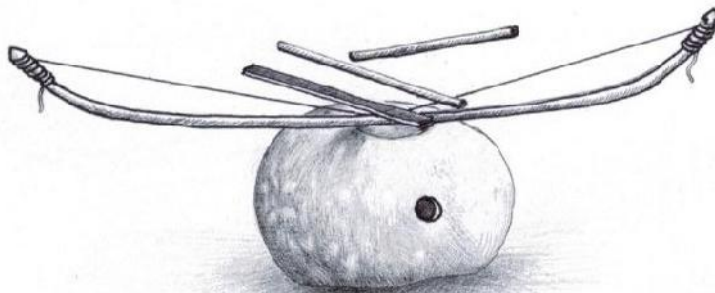
<sup>28</sup> However, these celebrations can be accounted in different ways in different communities. For instance, at Juktir the ceremony starts normally on a Sunday night and ends on Saturday morning, taking into account the five days in between. On the other hand, in Kauxbilhim they count the night when they start the celebration as the first day.

communal *xiotalh* that I attended at Juktir, the governor explained *la confesión* to me with these words when they were about to start:

Well, you already know, more or less, what we say here. Join us in your own language, in Spanish, it does not matter that it is not in Tepehuan. Here you will ask for it to rain beautifully; not only here, but everywhere in Mexico, all around the world; you will ask for the cattle to be healthy, for us not to get ill (Reyes 2006a: 100).

Besides *la confesión*, the ceremonial leaders pray three times a day, which they call *dar parte*, 'the dispatch' (Chapter 5), addressing the gods and asking them for good rains, good crops, health for cattle and people, and also for peace.

The most emblematic action of the ceremony is what is considered the *xiotalh* proper –the *mitote* – which is a dance, accompanied by the music of a bow, performed on the final night. The musician or *sokbolh* sits on a stool facing eastwards and with his back to the fire. The *sokbolh* holds the bow (*gat*) with one foot against a dried, hollow gourd on the floor. He holds a wooden stick in each hand, using them rhythmically to strike the bowstring while singing a song with very short phrases or monosyllabic enunciations (Cf. Hobgood 1970: 402; Reyes 2006a: 219; Willett 1996: 202). Exceptionally, in the communal *xiotalh* at Juktir, the bow is accompanied by a drum<sup>29</sup> and a bamboo flute.



**Image 2 The musical bow**

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<sup>29</sup> This is a cylindrical piece of wood, approximately 25cm in diameter and 40cm high, with hide patches on both sides.

During the night, participants of the same sex pair together by holding hands and dance counter clockwise in concentric circles (women around the men) around the musician and the fire. Men dance by standing with feet together, stepping forward with the right foot and then with the left, again lifting the right foot before the left foot reaches the floor and landing with both feet at the same time. Then, starting with the opposite foot, the dancer does the same again. People explicitly say that they 'dance 'like toads' (Reyes 2006a: 128), which according to mythological accounts was the animal that managed to trick the rain and brought it to the world (Benítez 1980: 146; Reyes 2006a: 240-242). Women, on the other hand, dance with long steps, lifting their heels pronouncedly while walking.

While dancing, the participants produce a particular sound by slapping their cowhide sandal soles against the floor. The music is sometimes enhanced by attaching many short, thin pieces of bamboo around the dancers' ankles, which alongside the sandal slaps produce sounds similar to the rain. The ceremony ends after the sunrise when the dancers stop the performance and one of the ceremonial leaders pronounces a final prayer.

#### GROWING MAIZE AND HUMANS

In this area of the Western Sierra Madre, in which O'dam people locate their fields between 1,000 and 2,600 metres above mean sea level (MAMSL), corn agriculture takes four to seven months, from sowing to harvest, depending on the altitude of specific fields. It takes more time to grow maize in the highlands than in the lowlands. In these topographic conditions, the O'dam make a basic landscape distinction between *jukgam*, the highlands and *taatsab*, the low and warm lands. The transition between the two is reached at around 1,400 MAMSL, and is marked by the presence of pine trees (*juk*) in the landscape as one ascends.

Maize seeds are adapted for different altitudes, which also produce different kinds of corn. These are classified according to the colour of the grain, and to the altitude at which it is grown. It is thus possible to have two types of any one kind of maize. There are, for instance, two types of blue corn: *jun jix*



*chiido' jukgam kam* (highlands blue corn) and *jun jix chiido' taatsab kam* (lowlands blue corn). While the colour is very easy to perceive, its origin is obvious only to trained observers. Maize from *jukgam* is normally lighter and a little soft, and is called *jabok jun*. On the other hand, maize from *taatsab* tends to be heavier and harder, and it is known as *kabak jun*. Ecological conditions inform basic corn classification as presented in the following table:<sup>30</sup>

Colour	Highlands	Lowlands
<i>Jix chooto jun</i> (White)	<i>Jukgam</i>	<i>Taatsab</i>
<i>Jix chiido' jun o titdujun jun</i> (bluish)	<i>Jukgam</i>	<i>Taatsab</i>
<i>Jix uam jun</i> (yellow)	<i>Jukgam</i>	<i>Taatsab</i>
<i>Jix bigiom jun</i> (reddish)	<i>Jukgam</i>	<i>Taatsab</i>
<i>Jix tabnalh o jix a'oi jun</i> (spotted) <sup>31</sup>	<i>Jukgam</i>	<i>Taatsab</i>

**Table 4 O'dam basic maize classification**

Among these types, people prefer blue maize for making tortillas because of its flavour.<sup>32</sup> However, the type of maize more often cultivated is that known as CAFIME, a non-native variety especially developed by the National Institute of Forestry, Agriculture, and Livestock Research in the 1950s, for agriculture in the Mexican semi-desert (INIFAP N.D.). There are also other varieties adapted to the different conditions of the O'dam *sierra*.

The differences between *jukgam* and *taatsab* have consequences for the agricultural and the ceremonial calendars. While at around 1,000 MAMSL maize is sown by early July and the harvest is expected by November, whereas at

<sup>30</sup> Here I am talking about the maize '*harinoso*', which is appropriate for making tortillas and other dough-based products. There are other edible types of maize like '*reventador*' (popcorn); and the *pozolero*, also known by the Náhuatl word *cacahuazintle* (Warman 1988: 26).

<sup>31</sup> In Santiago Teneraca: *jix tabñilh*.

<sup>32</sup> Blue or bluish corn is also known as '*mezclilla*', denim, because of its similarity to that fabric.

Yaatui cha'm (about 2,600 MAMSL) the sowing season is around the end of March or early April, and the harvest is expected at the same time as in the lowlands. In the transitional area between *taatsab* and *jukgam*, people frequently experiment with both varieties, since it allows for corn at different stages along the growing cycle.

Maize agriculture demands labour before, during and after sowing. Before sowing, the work is mainly that of field preparation and seed selection. In *taatsab*, for instance, people dedicate time to weeding of grasses that obstruct maize growth. To this end, they use commercial chemical products. At *jukgam* on the other hand, the preparations are more laborious and expensive. Virgin fields have to be cleared and probably burned before cultivation. The soil has to be tilled once or twice before sowing. Furthermore, in *taatsab* the fields (*xikuan*) are irregular and mainly located on slopes, where no yoke or tractor can be used. Here, the growers dig holes with a *gik* or planting stick and cover the seed using their feet. At *jukgam* people must pay to hire a tractor for making the furrow as well as for the tillage.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Many people still use the yoke in different places in *la sierra*. However, in the 1970s the Mexican Federal Government implemented the *Plan Nacional de Desarrollo* known as Plan HUICOT (acronym for Huichol-Cora-Tepehuan) extensively introducing the use of tractors on flat lands, mainly in Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconostle (Coordinación General del Plan Nacional de Zonas Deprimidas y Grupos Marginados 1978).



**Image 3 Woman with *gik*, close to Chianarkam**

While sowing, the grower must protect the seeds from the 'lazy ones', especially from crows and badgers, which wander around the fields ready to steal the seeds that have been planted. For this reason, there are people who deposit three seeds in each cavity, and they explain this by saying that there is 'one seed for the raccoon, one for the crow, and one for me'. Like in the story of the first grower and his marriage with the corn-woman, it is ideal to grow many plants from the corn family. Therefore, it is common to sow corn, beans, and gourds in the same field or even in the same hole. Amaranth is normally placed in a separate area.

Once the plants germinate, they are vulnerable to different kinds of threats, including animals like cattle and goats, and worm infestations. For this reason, growers devote much time to taking care of the plants in their fields during the days and nights. Also, it is common that the O'dam, (as well as other

indigenous people in the region), erect corrals for the maize plants (not for livestock) in order to protect them from animals.

Early plant development in the first month, is measured by the number of leaves, from one to ten. Around this time, the most dangerous threat is white worm (*bo'tpoda'*) infestations. People say that once they appear they are very difficult to control, and that only a healer can persuade them to leave through prayers and *tuisap* (toasted ground corn) offerings.

By middle of August, the tassels are visible, the ears shoot and the plants start silking.<sup>34</sup> By mid-September the kernel lines are defined resulting in baby corn, known as *títñip* – in Spanish by the Nahuatl word *jilote* - which is particularly vulnerable to both hailstones, causing them to fall from the plant; and the *tuimix*, the maize worm. People do not consider this too dangerous since the worm is not very gluttonous and can easily live with the plant. At this time, in the middle of the rainy season when the ground is soft and muddy, the *mai' bua bak* celebration to bless the baby corn is held in the Santa María de Ocotán area.<sup>35</sup> It takes place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August on the communal *xiotalh* patio, and around mid-September in the kinship celebrations (Reyes 2006a: 157).

During the *mai' bua bak* celebrated on kinship *xiotalh* patios, both children and maize are introduced to the ceremonial centre for the first time. Babies have to be at least one month old otherwise they have to wait until the celebration ceremony the following year. At this stage, maize and children are conceived and treated as equals: *títñip* (singular *títñip*) are tender soft corncoobs, while babies have soft fontanels still in the process of closing. At the same time, through this ceremony and those subsequent, maize and children start a process of differentiation one from the other.

*The mai' bua bak* is the only time men respect their agreement with the mother of corn, and so on this day the women do not work (Cf. Neurath 2008a: 40): they neither reap *títñip* nor participate in the ceremony. The explanation

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<sup>34</sup> Elongated stigmas (receptive tip of carpel), called silks, emerge from the whorl of husk leaves at the end of the ear. They are often pale yellow like tufts of hair in appearance.

<sup>35</sup> This particular ceremony is performed in the *xiotalh* patio but is not considered a proper *xiotalh* since there is no dance (Cf. Reyes 2006a: 257) and only last for one day and two nights.

for this is that women do not have fields and they are not growers (regardless of regularly participating actively in agricultural labours). Thereafter, women do not work on this day and they do not make tortillas either. The exception to this is the *tua'dam* (the female *xiotalh* leaders), who have maize fields and actively participate in the ceremony (Chapter 5). The babies' mothers are present and take care of their children, but they take part in the ceremony as a function of their children or husbands' participation, not only because this ceremony is not for women but also because women are affiliated to their father's *xiotalh* patio.

For this ceremony, male participants contribute tender fruits from their fields, which during this season are only *tititnip* and squashes, since beans and *chilacayotes* are still in the early stages of growth. Each kinship patio has its own rules about how many corncobs each man has to contribute. For example, among the Morales family from Juktir, they say each man has to provide nine corncobs: three for making *jaak* (toasted corn), three for 'tortillas',<sup>36</sup> and three for boiled maize. In this particular case, the number three is determined by the number of days this *xiotalh* normally lasts and by the tutelary deity they worship, which in this case is the Oikam. For some other kinship groups, for instance those who worship the Mobatak, the number five is central. Moreover, there are *xiotalh* where people do not count the number of corncobs they have to contribute and simply say that 'God our Father does not count for providing us with corn'.

During the ceremony, the mothers present their children twice a day on the *xiotalh* patio for their blessing while the *ceremonial* leaders are praying (*dar parte*): in the morning (about 8am) and in the afternoon. The women sit down in front of the altar, one behind the other, forming a line from east to west with their babies in their arms. Then the ceremonial leaders breathe tobacco smoke over their heads, touch the tops of their heads with their ceremonial feathered sticks, and sprinkle water on them. After that, the babies and their mothers remain sitting down while the *xiotalh* leaders pray. The next morning, about 6am, they repeat the procedure and after this, the ceremonial leaders feed the

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<sup>36</sup> It is important to mention that it is not possible to make tortillas with tender maize, but contributions must be considered following this rule.



babies by putting boiled *titnip* in their mouths. The babies receive drops of water from the *titnip*, the first contact they have with corn as food.



**Image 4 Mothers and their children in front of the *xiotalh*'s altar**

In October, the 'baby corn' becomes *jun baa'* or *elote* in Spanish (from Náhuatl *elotl*), 'corn on the cob',<sup>37</sup> and stays in this state for approximately ten days. Corn on the cob is young maize eaten as a vegetable rather than a grain (as it is in its final, mature stage). *Jun baa'* can be cooked by boiling, roasting or toasting the ears. By early September (in Chianarkam) or middle and late October (Juktir and Kauxbilhim), a couple of weeks before harvest, the O'dam celebrate the correspondent ceremonies to this stage of development. These *xiotalh* are respectively known in each community as *gaibak xiotalh*, *tamog'kam xiotalh*, and *gai' dañi*. In this set of ceremonies, there is a greater variety of fruit available in the fields and all are prefixed with *do'*, tender, or literally 'not ready'. There are *doi' jun [baa]* or tender corn on the cob; *doi' imai*, tender squashes; *doi' chilak*, tender *chilacayote*; *doi' bhab*, green beans. This stage of tenderness is very short, lasting no more than two weeks before the cobs become

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<sup>37</sup> Outside of Mexico, sweet [yellow] corn is the most popular version of *elote*. However, this is only one variety, since *elotes* can come from any maize colour and are not necessarily sweet.

completely mature. Only during this short time can people thus enjoy food like *doi' timkalh* (tortillas made with kernels from tender corncoobs), and *kusap* (a toasted dough made with grained tender kernels and toasted in maize leaves). For this *xiotalh*, men contribute with *doi' jun* and other *doi'* fruits from their fields and women prepare meals using these.



**Image 5 Kusap**

People say that 'this is the *jun baa's* festival', and so the *jun baa'* has to be present and participating. To that end, *xiotalh* leaders place corn canes (with the cobs still attached) at the front legs of either side of the altar, while they preside over the festivity. On the last night of the ceremony, the *xiotalh* leaders carry out the dance with the plants dancing with them and they state that 'the *jun baa'* is dancing'. With regard to children, their mothers present them twice a day for their blessing in front of the altar, during the morning and again in the afternoon when the ceremonial leaders pray *the dispatch*. Finally, before finishing the ceremony in the early morning after the night of the dance, the *xiotalh* leaders feed the children boiled *doi' jun* by putting boiled *junbaa'* in their mouths and touching it to their lips.





**Image 6 *Xiotalh* altar flanked by maize plants**

A couple of weeks later, by early or mid-November, normally after the Day of the Dead (the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November), the maize becomes dryer and harder, which in O'dam is called *jun*. This is the maize in its stage as a grain, and now it is too hard for boiling. To be edible, the kernels have to be either toasted and then ground for making *jaak* (although it is still hard), or undergo the *nixtamalization* process, in which corn kernels are soaked and then simmered in warm water with lime (calcium hydroxide) added to soften the outer shell.<sup>38</sup> After this, it is possible to ground the kernels mixed with water to obtain a dough that is used for making tortillas -as well as other meals - by cooking it in a pan.

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<sup>38</sup> The time required depends on the amount of corn and its particular hardness, but it takes between one and two hours.



Since corn as a grain can be stored for a long time there is no hurry to hold its corresponding celebration. The *xiotalh* for this stage of the maize and children's lives can be held over a wider range of time, from January to July. In the Juktir area, these are mainly celebrated during April or May, but in Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim these *xiotalh* take place in January. In the former, kinship *xiotalh* are celebrated alongside the communal *xiotalh* prior to the rainy season, while the latter two are associated with the New Year *xiotalh*. In Juktir they are called *tabagkam xiotalh*, 'in the dry season'; in Chianarkam *jaak xiotalh*, and *jaak dañi* in Kauxbilhim. In the two latter places, the name alludes to the toasted corn, which people consume during these celebrations. Maize appears here in its hard, dried form, as a grain and as a seed, while the babies are now between six and twelve months of age and are also becoming 'harder', with firmer fontanels.

Older children of between ten and fourteen years are 'harder' still, and so in this ceremony they are introduced to a new stage of life as well, becoming young adults through the ritualised drinking of *mezcal* (distilled century-plant liquor) or *biñ*.<sup>39</sup> Having been in an ambivalent state, at the end of the ceremony in the early morning, babies and children are reaffirmed in their humanity by the consumption of the *nabaich* (explained in the next section) and three other foodstuffs: *nixtamalized* maize in the form of *timaich*; roasted deer or squirrel; and salt. This is the first time babies consume this food, and it is the first time older children drink alcoholic beverages.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> From Spanish '*vino*', wine.

<sup>40</sup> Coyle (2001: 56) highlights how the equivalent ceremony among the Cora (the Liquor-Drinking Ritual) establishes in the *mitote* a connection between children and the 'deceased maize bundle group ancestors'. The ritual has a similar sense among the O'dam during the *xiotalh*. However, it is important to notice how it is precisely through this ritual that babies and youngsters are introduced into the consumption of maize, deer, salt, and liquor, which is what makes them 'humans' instead of deities.

The Morales family [in Santa María de Ocotán] offers hawk feathers in May, because at that time eagles show up, bringing life. This is also the season when trees grow. Therefore, when we are ill and May arrives, we put the feathers [in the *xiotalh*] and life sprouts. The year as well as the people are renewed at that time (Eugenio Morales, Durango, Dgo., June 2012).

In the area of Santa María de Ocotán, the O'dam celebrate *tabagkam xiotalh* in the season of life's regeneration. This ceremony acts as a hinge between two parts of both, the ritual and the life cycles. By this time maize has already matured as a grain to become the main foodstuff of the O'dam as well as a new seed, capable of continuing the agricultural cycle. At the same time, babies are in their final state of a transition that will completely separate them from the corn and enable them to start fully living as humans, and to eat maize. This does not mean that the children stop being corn, but that the *jun baa'* (corncoobs) leave humanity to become deified ancestors (Cf. Neurath 2008a: 42). Babies are separated as well from the game animals such as deer, which in this ceremony are equated with maize and consumed together in a single dish known as *junma'n*.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, in this ceremony, older children pass into adulthood, becoming potential spouses, heads of new households, and agriculturists in their own right. In Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco de Ocotán the equivalent ceremony is *Jaak xiotalh*, which is associated with the New Year communal *xiotalh* celebrated in January. In these *xiotalh*, the men who have previously been 'fully initiated in maize consumption' contribute corncoobs to the ceremony. Once again, the number of corncoobs is defined by the number of days that each celebration lasts in its particular *xiotalh* patio.

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<sup>41</sup> Maize and deer are conceived as close entities as well as having corresponding life cycles (Cf. Neurath 2005c). For the O'dam a good time for hunting is prior to the harvest. In the nights of October when the Milky Way is bright the O'dam call this 'deer fat' and they say this means the deer are fat enough to be hunted.

In contrast with other *xiotalh*, this ceremony emphasises the relationship between humans and their deified ancestors, the founders of the *xiotalh*, first growers and first hunters. The relation is reified and renewed not only in relation to the O'dam founders of *xiotalh* in general, but with the founders of specific kinship *xiotalh*. In the communal patios these deities are the couple formed by Jich Oo' Jich Chaat and Jich Oo' Jich Naan, Our Powerful Father and Our Powerful Mother (Reyes 2010a: 284). More common in the kinship *xiotalh*, are our father and mother the Oikam, the Mobatak, the Chii' (the Morning Star), the Bha'aa' (golden eagle), the Jix kai' chio'ñ' (cultural hero associated with the Morning Star), the Xibun, and the Gi'ok, among others.<sup>42</sup>

Mythological accounts state that a group of ancestors met together to come to an agreement about the number of days – which in the gods' time means years – that they should hold the ceremonial abstinences necessary to celebrate a *xiotalh*. In a version recorded in Kauxbilhim,<sup>43</sup> Chii' (the Morning Star), Jix kai' chio'ñ' (who was ruling the world), and Jich Chatalh (Our Uncle) are mentioned among the participants. Older brothers (the story does not specify who they were), stated they should hold abstinences lasting from a month to up to a year. But the younger brothers opposed this, arguing that even for gods free of sin such as themselves, it was difficult to fulfil that expectation, and that consequently it would be impossible for humans. They suggested five days as a term instead, but the older brothers insisted on their own proposal. Afterwards they met to celebrate the first *xiotalh*. On the fourth day, when the older brothers were hunting a deer for the celebration, they broke their abstinences by having sexual intercourse. The story describes them as finding a deer track on the ground, after which they 'played around' by sticking their arrows into it. As a punishment, the elder brothers lost their places to their younger brothers, and since that time the *xiotalh* celebrations have been the way suggested by the younger brothers. The story also specifies that people worshipping Chii', have to celebrate *xiotalh* over five days, performing the dance during the fifth night and thus ending the celebration the next morning. Those

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<sup>42</sup> In Santa María de Ocotán the two first are the most common. However, in Santiago Teneraca I have registered about a dozen of different names corresponding to kinship *xiotalh*'s tutelary deities.

<sup>43</sup> Narrated to me by Don Bernardino de la Cruz.

worshipping Jix kai' chio'ñ' and Our Mother have to celebrate for four days; and those worshipping the Uncle must hold the *xiotalh* over three days.

As in the communal *xiotalh*, these deified ancestors are present as couples in kinship patios. In Santa María de Ocotán, these ancestors are of the same name but have different genders. There are, for instance, couples like Oikam Jich Chaat, and Oikam Jich Naan or Mobatak Jich Chaat and Mobatak Jich Naan, Our Father and Our Mother. In Santiago Teneraca, these couples are paired in a different way, by attributing different genders to different deities. For example, in Chianarkam there is a *xiotalh* patio which has Xibun as male and Bha'aa' as female deities. The most contrasting case in this respect is that of San Francisco de Ocotán where kinship patios have between two and five tutelary deities. For instance, on one of the *xiotalh* patios I registered one female and three male deities, namely: Intña'a (the Mother) and Mobatak, Bahaa, Chiï'.

On the first morning of the *xiotalh*, the ceremonial leaders erect an altar where the participants place the corn cobs they contribute. That morning, the *kikam* fashions two arrows known as *iagit* from pieces of bamboo, which will impersonate the *xiotalh* tutelary deities during the ceremonies.<sup>44</sup> The size of the *iagit* can vary from one *xiotalh* to another. It is normal that communal patios are larger than the kinship patios. While in the former *iagit* are between 1.5m and 2m long (in Juktir and Kauxbilhim, for instance), and in the latter (also in the communal at Chianarkam) they are approximately 0.50m long. In any case, all the participants in the *xiotalh*, men and women, contribute five feathers (three for the male and two for the female), attaching these to the blunt ends of their sticks. An important difference between communal and kinship *xiotalh* is that while in communal *xiotalh* people use feathers from almost every flying bird, on kinship patios it is mandatory that they be from hawks.<sup>45</sup> These types of feathers require an abstention from salt during the ceremony, which only the ceremonial leaders hold in the communal *xiotalh*: 'we abstain from salt because

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<sup>44</sup> It is important to mention that, while in Chianarkam and close by places, the names of these deities are common knowledge among *xiotalh* participants. In Juktir this is a matter mainly concerning the *xiotalh* leaders and senior participants.

<sup>45</sup> In O'dam they are called *uim* and they refer to them in Spanish as *agullillas*, 'little eagles'.

eagles are not salty; there is an eagle coming down and granting life, so life has no salt' (Eugenio Morales, Durango, Dgo., June 2012).



**Image 7 The *iagit* behind the *xiotalh* leader in Kauxbilhim**

Before attaching the feathers to the sticks, all the participants, starting with *xiotalh* leaders, cleanse their bodies by superficially rubbing themselves (regardless of their clothes) with their personal set of feathers, from their feet to the tops of their heads. Then they attach the feathers to the top or along the sticks with a white thread (ideally handmade cotton). The *kikam* then stands these sticks along the front legs of the altar, where they will remain until the night of the *xiotalh* dance. They are on the right (south) Jich Chaat, Our Father and on the left (north) Jich Naan, Our Mother.



**Image 8 The *iagit* in Chianarkam**

#### DETACHMENT FROM THE ANCESTORS' WORLD AND THE REAFFIRMATION OF HUMANITY

In contrast to those participants who attach feathers to the *iagit* and abstain from salt consumption, there are the babies who are about to be initiated in the latter's consumption. For them, as well as for those older children who are passing into adulthood, the preparation and drinking of the *nabaich* are a prior requirement. To that end, the babies' parents and the older children themselves make three objects which have to be attached together: a container with a beverage made with small of pieces of agave or century plan (described below); a basic form of arrow; and a crown called *si'lhik* which is woven with *soyate*, palm, (*Brahea dulcis*) leaves. These participants also need: a clay cup (occasionally substituted with a pewter cup); water collected from special 'sacred' springs; a small agave plant known as *a'lh mai* (*Agavep cf.*

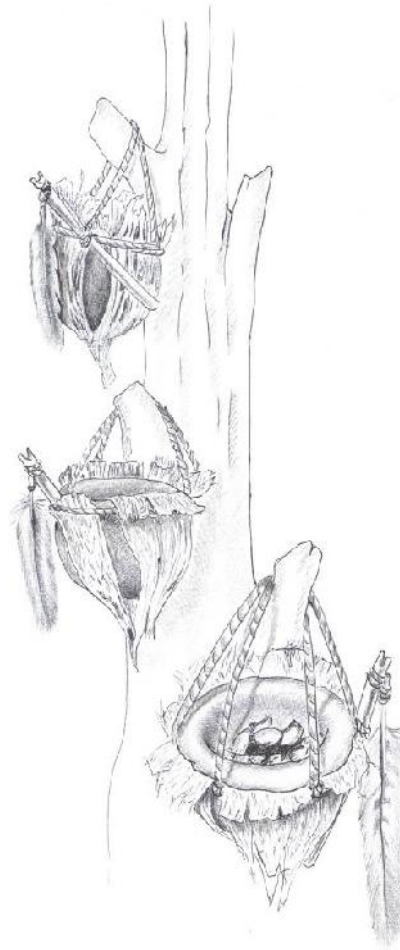
*maximiliana*) collected in the forest; a kind of yucca named *iikob*, also collected in the forest; and a cord normally made from agave fibres. For the arrow the necessary items are: a piece of bamboo, which is bought or cut from the family's yard; a hawk feather, which is bought or reused from a former offering and collected in a sacred place; a white thread; and a red coloured resin (*kopal*) named vermilion.

In their manufacture, male *xiotalh* leaders separate agave leaves and roast the stalks in the embers of the central bonfire. The babies' fathers smash pieces of yucca until they are able to extract thin and extended fibres from the plant. With these, they cover the exterior of the cup from top to bottom, and fix these using a cord, which is also made into a handle. Using another piece of this fibre, they make a kind of brush the size of a spoon, which they will use later in the ceremony as a sprinkler. They put it into the cup and leave it there. Then, they add five small pieces of roasted agave into the cup together with five squirts of water. For the arrow, the babies' fathers and the older children themselves cut a piece of bamboo, approximately 30cm long, colour one end red, and then using white thread attach a feather to this section, which corresponds to the blunt end.<sup>46</sup> The participants fix the arrow vertically to one side of the cup with the cord around it. The last item is the *si'lhik*, which has to be woven by someone who knows the technique, not necessarily the individual or the parents themselves.<sup>47</sup> Once everything is ready, every person or the babies' parents give their cups to the *xiotalh* leaders who hang them from the front support of the altar: boys at the southern side (to the right when standing in front of the altar), and girls on the northern side (or to the left from the same perspective).

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<sup>46</sup> These sticks have no sharpened end thus, both ends are 'blunt'. People do not refer to them as arrows or *u'uu*. However, the name used in O'dam language is *biñak* (Chapter 3), which corresponds to a similar object that people clearly identify as 'arrows'. By the blunt end, I allude in this case to the 'top end' when the stick stands vertical.

<sup>47</sup> Sometimes the *si'lhik* is woven on the last day of the ceremony, when it is going to be used. It is also common that participants in the ceremony use a kerchief instead.



**Image 9 The *nabaich***

Besides maize, babies are about to be initiated in the consumption of game meat. Every morning during the ceremony men go off to hunt deer or squirrel. This is practised in all *xiotalh* patios; but while during communal *xiotalh* the ceremony can be performed and finished without catching any game (Chapter 4). In kinship patios this is essential for the children's initiation.<sup>48</sup> Mythology states that men are searching for a deer on their journey. Nevertheless, O'dam people say that *bho'mkox* (grey squirrel -*Sciurus aureogaster*-) is accepted, as are wild turkey and wild boar. However, *bho'mkox* is the most common, while

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<sup>48</sup> In Juktir, I have participated several times in the ceremony and taken part in the hunting journey and I have never witnessed a successful hunt. There, the journey mainly serves to introduce and incorporate young adults (between sixteen and twenty years of age) in communal work. Every day of the *xiotalh*, the authorities designate five men who will go, with no food nor water, to search for the deer at a different cardinal point. Every day they get back to the *xiotalh* patio three or four hours later bringing only flowers in their bags (Reyes 2006a: 110-113).



deer is rare (mainly used in Santiago Teneraca), and I did not see turkey or wild boar used in these ceremonies. When the hunters get back to the *xiotalh* patio with the game, they put it either on the altar (particularly *bho'mkox*), or hang it from one the platform supports.<sup>49</sup>

During the penultimate night, the women cook the *títmaich* (singular *tímaich*) for their husbands (when they accompany the men), their children and themselves. There are two possible sizes of *tímaich*: the small, which is about 10cm long and 3cm wide; and the regular *tímaich* is about 20cm long and 10cm wide. On the morning of the last day, every male and female participant -except for those not fully initiated- give to the *xiotalh* leaders their set of regular *títmaich* (three, four or five, as per the kinship tradition), which they place on the top of the altar where they remain during the day and throughout the following night. Small *títmaich* in the communal *xiotalh* have different ends to those used in kinship patios. In kinship patios, small *títmaich* are for the babies and children being initiated.<sup>50</sup> They or their parents hang the *títmaich* together from the front altar legs beside their *nabaich*, where they remain for the whole day and part of the last night.

On the last evening, those older boys and girls, who are going to be initiated into adulthood make *atuulh* to offer that night to the rest of the participants. This is a thick, whitish beverage made by mixing together hot water, wheat flour and *maikak* (raw sugar).<sup>51</sup> Every kinship group has its own rules about the age these youngsters must be for this initiation. In general, they are between fourteen and sixteen years of age, but in some kinship groups children go through this ritual as soon as they are able to carry the containers (buckets with a capacity of 25 litres approximately) with *atuulh* by themselves, when boys are around ten and girls twelve years of age. At about 9pm, once it is dark and only illuminated by the light of the bonfire, the participants in the

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<sup>49</sup> Hanging the game from the altar or from a pole is, according with Coyle (2008), one of the central features of what he calls the 'deer hunting ritual complex' among the central Uto-Nahua.

<sup>50</sup> At communal *xiotalh* the last morning after the dance, the *tu'adam* puts the small *títmaich* in a container (sometimes the gourd of the musical instrument) under the altar. This is then distributed among the participants. People say these *títmaich* are 'dangerous' because the big ones on the top of the altar will go to heaven, where God asks them about people's behaviour, and they will then ask the small ones remaining 'down here', so they can accuse people about their faults (Reyes 2006a: 155).

<sup>51</sup> Similar to the molasses sold in solid conical form.

ceremony meet at the patio, taking their places on the side corresponding to their gender: males to the south, females to the north. With the altar in the middle of the groups, they form a semi-circle south-east-north. Everyone, except for the novices, sit down with a small container for receiving the *atuulh* that the older children are about to distribute. The small group of boys and girls<sup>52</sup> stand close to the altar with the boys on the south side and the girls on the north side and a bucket full of *atuulh* at their feet. With a signal from the *xiotalh* leader, they start giving out portions (a cup or a bowl) of *atuulh* to everyone on their correspondent side, starting with the closest person to the altar, who is normally one of the *xiotalh* leaders. When they are finished serving their own side, they cross to the other via the western side of the patio, behind the bonfire, and continue with the last person on the opposite side. When they have finished, they start again at the beginning of the line on their own side, continuing in this way until the *atuulh* runs out. Meanwhile, the other participants drink the *atuulh* while chatting.

At about 10pm, the ceremonial leaders start to prepare for the dance performance. The *umuagim* takes both the bow and the gourd from under the altar and walks with them counter-clockwise around the fire in order to present the musical instrument to the dance court. People would say this is 'the instrument's dance'. The *umuagim* stops on the western side of the fire and raises the objects to head height east of the altar, showing the instruments to deities. He repeats this on the other side of the fire before the altar. After doing this three or five times the *umuagim* then places the instruments before the fire on the eastern side, where the musician will play. The bow player may belong to the kinship group, but it is more common that he does not.

Before *sokbolh* starts striking the bowstring, the ceremonial leaders call for the participants to meet in front of the altar with the men on the southern side and the women to the north. Headed by the *umuagim* and the *tua'dam* respectively, they form two double lines of same sex couples holding hands, on either side of the altar. Taking the feathered sticks in his hands the *kikam*

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<sup>52</sup> This number can vary. The largest group I have seen was at the Mobatak patio in Chianarkam in 2008. This *xiotalh* exceptionally sees eight extended families with eight different paternal surnames congregate. This time there were approximately twenty boys and twenty girls. However, the most common group size is five or six individuals of each gender.

approaches the altar, he walks to the centre of the patio and stands before the musician. The *kïkam* raises his hands over his head, holding the *iagit* parallel to the floor with the feathers hanging downwards. Guided by the head of their lines the people in front of the altar, walk backwards towards the west for approximately 2m, and as the musician hits the bowstring three times, the novices move forward with three pronounced dance steps, as described above.

These steps, backwards and forwards, are repeated five times (this varies), before the dance around the fire begins. The musician starts playing consistently and the male line moves left, counter clockwise around the *kïkam*, the musician, and the fire. Once the men pass the last person in the women's line, the latter turn to their left and follow the men dancing in an external ring around them. While passing in front of the *kïkam* people touch the hanging *iagit* feathers with their heads. After five rounds, the *kïkam* joins the male line, dancing five rounds with them and 'dancing the *iagit*'. He separates himself from the dancing line and approaches the altar where he replaces the *iagit*, this time attaching them to the rear legs of the altar to indicate that the *iagit* have already left and gone to heaven. People continue to dance throughout the night, taking turns and breaks every so often.

At about 4am the music stops and the ceremonial leaders approach the altar. The *kïkam* calls the boys and girls who are going to pass to adulthood. They approach the altar and sit down on the ground in front of it, forming two parallel lines from east to west, on their corresponding sides. The *umuagim* takes the *si'lhik* (woven crowns) or a kerchief from the altar and puts these around the novices' heads, along with a flower at the forehead, another at the back of the head, and one at each temple. Thereafter, the *xiotalh* leaders stand behind the novices, facing east with their ceremonial paraphernalia (a set of arrows and a lit pipe) in their hands and pronounce a brief (no more than 5 minutes) prayer. When they finish praying, the *kïkam* or the *umuagim* take the *nabaitch* clay cups from the altar. First identifying which cup belongs to which novice, the *kïkam* approaches each one and using a piece of yucca fibre as a sprinkler, he sprinkles liquid from the cups into their mouths. He does this five times for each person and then he returns the cups to the altar. After this, the *kïkam* calls to their *pa'riin* (an adult who provides a bottle of *mezcal* for the

newcomers and drinks it on their behalf).<sup>53</sup> Everyone has his or her own *pa'riin* although they can be shared.<sup>54</sup> Standing at each side of the altar, boys on the south and girls on the north, the *kikam* or the *umuagim* serves five shots of *mezcal* to each of the newcomers and this is passed to the *pa'riin* who drinks it on their behalf. After this ceremony the boys and girls can drink alcohol freely and smoke tobacco without the risk of being stung by a scorpion.<sup>55</sup> Some families state that they can now have boyfriends or girlfriends.

The *xiotalh* leaders call the mothers to bring their babies to the front of the altar. They sit down in a similar way to the novices, with their babies in their arms. The *umuagim* puts the *si'lhik* and flowers on their heads, and after a short prayer by the ceremonial leaders, the *kikam* feeds the babies with the *nabaich*. Next the *kikam* takes the small *timaich* from the altar as well as two clay bowls from the top of the altar containing salt and small pieces of roasted squirrel meat respectively, and puts them on the floor in front of the babies and older children. Approaching the babies and the older children, the *kikam* feeds them one by one a small portion of *timaich*, meat and a pinch of salt. In the case of babies, each foodstuff is provided separately and only touches their lips, this being their first contact real food. Older children receive the three components together in their mouths and this is eaten completely. All the participants receive the food five times. Following this everyone stands up and returns the *si'lhik* to the *kikam* or the *umuagim* who hangs these back onto the altar. Now all the other participants, men and women, go to the altar and put a pinch of salt in their mouths, thus breaking their salt fast. Following this the dance is resumed.

When the dawn breaks the participants stop dancing. Men and women regroup in parallel lines at the front of the altar facing eastwards. At the head and between the two lines, the *xiotalh* leaders pronounce one last prayer (fifteen minutes approximately) to formally ends the ceremony. Thereafter, the *kikam* or the *umuagim* selects a boy (normally not older than ten or twelve

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<sup>53</sup> From the Spanish *padrino*, Godfather. Beyond the religious context, with the term *padrino* or female *madrina*, in Mexico people allude to different kinds of relations between senior members of a society who support the youngsters rather like mentors and pupils. This is common in secular contexts where individuals pass from one stage to another. For example, as a student it is common to have a *padrino* at school graduations.

<sup>54</sup> In 2008 at the Morales patio, for example, I was the *pa'riin* for twin sisters.

<sup>55</sup> O'dam people state that scorpions are Gods' watchers (Ambriz and Gurrola 2013a: 75).

years) and an adult male to go and deposit the *iagit* and the remains of the *nabaich* (cup, arrow and *si'lhik*) at the *iagit tam* (literally the place of *iagit*), in a rock shelter linked to the *xiotalh* patio. Every patio has this, although some patios that worship the same ancestors (giving its name to the shelter) share one of these places.<sup>56</sup> Some are close to the ceremonial patios, like that of the Morales family (from Juktir), which is located approximately half an hour's walk from the patio; while others can be one or two days away by horse. The chosen individuals receive the objects from the *xiotalh* leaders' hands and then they leave the patio, walking swiftly. When they reach the *iagit tam*, they deposit the objects among the older, similar ones from former ceremonies, such as cups, arrows, *si'lhik* and deer's antlers; or from other offerings left by people pledging for the favours of specific deities: flowers, candles, money, as well as small pieces of cloth for gods.

Meanwhile, on the ceremonial patio, people prepare to break the food fast. To do so, the *kikam* takes a pot with water that has remained here for the whole ceremony from the top of the altar. Men gather around the fire, and women go to the northern side of the ceremonial centre, to wash themselves, in order to receive the ceremonial meal. The *kikam* or another man (an older man is always preferred) takes some water from the pot in his mouth and energetically blows it onto each side of each man's face. When the men finish, the *tua'dam* takes the pot and does the same thing to the women. After this the *xiotalh* leaders take meals from the altar and distribute them among the participants. In *tabagkam* or *jaak xiotalh*, *bhomkox junma'n* and *kapaliom* stand out as ceremonial meals. The former is a stew made with corn dough and squirrel (or deer) meat; the latter are meatball-sized lumps of *jaak* (grained toasted mature corn), which besides tortillas is the other way that maize is ceremonially consumed in its hard and mature state as a seed. After the meal, people leave the ceremonial centre.

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<sup>56</sup> Exceptionally, the communal patio in Santa María de Ocotán has its *iagit tam* in a chapel on top of a prominent mountain known as Naksir tam, Scorpion Hill, on the eastern side of Juktir.

## CONCLUSIONS

In order to become a person in O'dam terms, it is necessary to set and reproduce an ancestral relation with maize and its deities. It is a symbiotic relationship where maize needs to grow and O'dam need maize to live. Neither can live without the other. Of course the O'dam know it is possible not to grow maize, but that is exactly one of the features which makes them different from other people such as the Mestizo. Not growing maize places 'people' on the margins of humanity. Mestizo people eat corn, but they get it from the supermarket and have forgotten to do '*el costumbre*'. As Neurath (2008a: 39) notices among the Huichol, 'humanity and ethnicity are acquired through a relation with maize by alliance', but also it is the result of failed hunting and in shamanic initiation. Consequently, growing corn by having a relationship with its deities is 'what ordinary [indigenous] people do'.

## Chapter 2

### The Mestizo Gods from Church

In Santa María de Ocotán the Virgin Immaculate Conception appeared on the top of the Scorpion Hill alongside a star. She appeared to an O'dam boy and told him the traditions that we must follow as indigenous people.

Asiano de la Rosa Calleros (2003: 6).<sup>57</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

O'dam mythological accounts state that the tutelary deities from each community appeared a long time ago at the top of a hill or crag in the vicinity of their current village locations. These are the patron saints who give their names to those villages which are the religious and political centres known as communal *cabeceras*. Thus, the Spanish-Náhuatl name of Juktir, 'Santa María de Ocotán', honours Virgin Mary in her avocation of the Immaculate Conception;<sup>58</sup> Chianarkam<sup>59</sup> or Santiago Teneraca honours Saint James; and Kauxbilhim, San Francisco de Ocotán to Saint Francis, and so on. Those places of 'the gods' original apparition are identified in the landscape and they are themselves sacred places.<sup>60</sup> For instance, the *sapook* or stories inform us that the Virgin appeared close to Juktir on the top of the Naksir tam, the Scorpion Hill, where a boy found her. The O'dam decided to take her to the village, that is located at the foot of the hill, and place her there. However, the next morning the virgin had disappeared and people found her later on the hill where she was originally discovered. They took her back with them once again, but she insisted

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<sup>57</sup> My translation from Spanish.

<sup>58</sup> The word 'Ocotán' on the other hand means 'the pine tree's place' in Náhuatl: *ocotlán*.

<sup>59</sup> Unclear etymology.

<sup>60</sup> As I discuss in the Introduction, I keep the English word 'gods' as a literal translation of the Spanish term '*dioses*'. The O'dam use this word to refer to all the patron saints and divinities from the church, as well as those from the *xiotalh* patio (Reyes 2006a: 85).

on returning to the hill. This pattern repeated itself five times until the O'dam built a church and placed her there. According to the story, the virgin felt comfortable in her new 'house' and decided to stay there.<sup>61</sup> However this was not easy to manage and demanded the work of five powerful shamans to fast for five days (five years in human time) to convince the Virgin to stay in the village.

The apparitions of the patron saint and the sacrifices conducted by the O'dam shamans founded a relationship between Christian deities and humans. These tutelary Christian deities set the principles for the relationship by telling O'dam people of 'the traditions we must follow as indigenous people' (Rosa 2003: 6), as stated in the epigraph. This resulted in a demanding relationship for the O'dam who had to, from then on, fulfil several expectations of the gods, mainly delivered through self-sacrifice, offerings, and ritual actions. In this chapter I describe how O'dam people have incorporated Catholicism into their lives and how they address their relations with the Christian gods under their own social conditions and conceptions of divinity. This relationship has to be framed within a wider context of alterity where these gods are identified as 'foreign' or 'Mestizo'. To this end, I highlight how the O'dam reproduce the principles they follow in their relations with divinity in general, such as abstinences in order to approach the deities (Chapter 1). By establishing degrees of proximity to the gods, with their own 'initiated people' acting as intermediaries in that relation, in a similar way to shamans in other modes of interaction with divinity.

Since the *fiestas patronales*, patron saint festivals, are the most evident form of worshipping these gods, their analysis has been central in the study of ritual life in the Gran Nayar area (Coyle 2001; Jáuregui and Neurath 2003; Reyes 2006a). Specifically in the case of Tepehuan, Willett (1996) approached this form of public ceremonies by stressing an opposition between *xiotalh* ceremonies and the 'folk Christian fiestas', proposing a model what she names as 'the dual festival system of the Southern Tepehuan'. Nevertheless, I consider

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<sup>61</sup> In San Francisco de Ocotán it happens in the opposite way: Saint Francis appeared exactly where the church is currently located. People tried to place Saint Francis in a nearby location called La Mesa but the saint returned to the place where he originally appeared. Eventually people agreed to build the church there (Cruz 2007: 44).



that festivals are the ‘very visible’ convergence point in time and space, of the efforts undertaken at different times during the year by different people and with different degrees of proximity with the deities. Hence, in this chapter I focus on how people set these differentiated relations and only as a result of this, I proceed to describe some of the aspects of festivals, always emphasising the forms of interaction between people and Christian deities.



**Image 10 The view of Chianarkam from Chinarak tam, where the apparition of Saint James occurred**

#### THE FOREIGN CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN GODS

In contrast to the O'dam deities worshipped on *xiotalh* patios and mainly related to maize agriculture, the gods from Christianity are identified as Spanish or mestizo and connected to European endeavours. In their mestizo character, deities wear Mexican hats and sarapes, with some, like Saint James, riding a horse. This image is also depicted in mythological accounts which, for example, describe Joseph (Jesus' father) as a 'well-dressed cowboy skilled at cattle

riding' (Reyes 2006a: 245-246). Consequently, it is not strange that these gods had to be 'dominated' by shamans in order to hold and incorporate them in O'dam life. However, such events are not limited to mythological times.<sup>62</sup> In fact, the similar actions have been conducted by shamans for the introduction of new cults in recent years. In 2000, the community of Santa María de Ocotán inaugurated the new millennium by celebrating Our Lady of Candles (2<sup>nd</sup> of February) for the first time as well as Saint Anthony of Padua (13<sup>th</sup> of June). Later in 2003 San Juan Diego (9<sup>th</sup> of December), the first Native American canonized by the Catholic Church was celebrated (Reyes 2006a: 57-59). In each case, with five shamans performing corresponding activities by partaking in abstinences, praying and conducting an array of sacrifices for five years prior to the celebration in order to bestow the saints' images with, *ii'mda'*, 'vital force'. Without such action the deities, would be nothing more than sculptures.<sup>63</sup> Such hard work is only the beginning. The deities must be celebrated every year with a big festival, failing this the penalty of damnation and death will befall those who are responsible for its organization.

The cult within the Christian church is associated with different aspects of European influences introduced during colonial times.<sup>64</sup> Good luck regarding stock breeding, politics, school, drug trafficking and other mestizo activities are the main reasons people pray in church.<sup>65</sup> Further, such reasons for prayer are also considered individualistic, in contrast to season and agricultural cycles, which imbue communal benefits. In Juktir, people attribute specific gifts to certain church deities like: the Jich Xoi'kam,<sup>66</sup> Jesus Christ, grants wisdom and good memory; Saint Michael protects against being shot as well as granting good aim when shooting a gun; Saint James provides horses and chickens;

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<sup>62</sup> 'We should not ask so much whether it is true, but why it matters' (Strathern 1981: 17 cited in Gow 1991: 16).

<sup>63</sup> From an anthropological perspective we would say this is the way 'to bestow the images with agency', not only with the capacity of consciousness and action, but also to mediate social relationships (Gell 1999: 7).

<sup>64</sup> This is common in the Gran Nayar area. For instance, among the Huichol, Jesus is the god of money, attributing its creation to him during the Holy Week alongside cattle and horses (Neurath, 2002: 321; 2003: 22). Furthermore, the Huichol name for Jesus is Xaturi Xumpe, 'the Dark Blue Mestizo' (Neurath 2005b: 33).

<sup>65</sup> Willett (1996: 198) notices that in O'dam Christian festivals the majority of paraphernalia is European rather than indigenous.

<sup>66</sup> It literally means 'our humble person' (Willett et al. 2013: 83).

Saint John gives lambs and horses, while Saint Francis provides 'all sorts of things' [*sic*], people say.

Despite their outsider character, some deities and their relations to each other reproduce similar relationships than those attributed to the 'native indigenous gods'. For instance, since Jesus has a luminous-solar character, often he changes place in mythological accounts with Tanolh, the sun. There is a similar situation in the relation between Jesus and Saint Michael, which replicates the relation between the older and younger brother, or twins frequently represented by the Morning and the Evening stars or by the Morning Star and the sun.<sup>67</sup> The O'dam character impersonating the Morning Star, Jix kai' chio'ñ, is often called Miguel, Michael (Cf. Reyes 2006a: 87),<sup>68</sup> while Saint Michael is often characterized alongside the attributes of the Morning Star such as a bow and arrows.

As a result of Franciscan evangelisation in the O'dam area (Cf. Vallebuena 2009a: 14; 2009b: 77), the main patron saints worshipped are: Saint Michael, Saint James, Saint Francis, Saint John, Virgin of Nativity, Virgin of Guadalupe, Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, and Our Lady of Candles. They are especially worshipped in their shrines at the places where they are the tutelary deity. Many of them are located in the villages of Cora, Mexicanero or Huichol as well as in Mestizo villages with a recognized –by the O'dam – indigenous past. The most relevant patron saints in this situation, given their importance for the O'dam, are Saint Peter, in the Mexicanero village San Pedro Jícoras and Saint Michael, located in the mestizo (previously O'dam) village of San Miguel Temoaya.

In the wider scope of the relationships that the O'dam have with their gods, their relation to church gods is the most complex. This involves many levels of proximity (initiation degrees) between humans and gods; and different levels of social organization (from individual to the communal level), converging at the same place, the church. Furthermore, worshipping church gods is

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<sup>67</sup> This mythological *bricolage* is common among indigenous groups in the area of Northwest Mexico and Southwest United States. For northwest Mexican cases see Reyes and Oseguera (2015).

<sup>68</sup> Sánchez (1980: 96) interpreted this assimilation as a 'confusion' made by the O'dam between the Christian saints and this cultural hero.

possible at any time of the year, during the day or night, individually or in groups, privately or publicly.

As with any other ritual context regarding the O'dam, to be in a close relationship with church gods demands becoming *xidhuukam*, 'becoming blessed' by adhering to corresponding abstinences. Even the simple act of getting into the church, which is itself a *xidhuukam* or blessed body, people must have previously taken a shower and afterwards they must refrain from any physical contact with the opposite sex, especially sexual intercourse, drinking alcohol, and getting angry. These abstinences must be held during the interaction with deities and during a *postliminal* term of five days known as *odhargan*. This period is terminated by having a shower.<sup>69</sup>

With this in mind, it is necessary to be critical of Willett's (1996) sharp distinction about the different behaviours followed during the *xiotalh* and in Christian celebrations. She contends that 'these activities [drunkenness and sexual intercourse], which are normal in moderation in everyday life, are knowingly intensified during the folk Christian fiestas' (Willett 1996: 200). This, in my opinion, is how festivals look on the surface, if we focus on their environment only. If we look a bit further, we can see that festivals and any other activity in church replicate well many features from the *xiotalh* celebration, particularly solemnity and the abstentions required, which are the base for any O'dam ritual context.

Furthermore, we can observe that in the context of the church there are different degrees of involvement defined by different degrees of proximity with deities: initiated people share lifelong relations with the deities; and un-initiated people share temporary relations. Nevertheless, since I consider initiation always as a matter of degree, it is possible to state that all the O'dam have a minimal initiation in their relation with deities, what in the context of the church is determined by baptism. After this *rite du passage*, beginning in childhood, individuals are gradually incorporated into a relationship with deities by fulfilling different roles and responsibilities especially destined for different life stages.

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<sup>69</sup> It does not mean people cannot have another shower.

Individuals are introduced through baptism into the relation with Christian deities. The ritual of baptism is normally conducted during the first year of life. Being the only ritual for which the O'dam require a Catholic priest,<sup>70</sup> they state that when babies are not baptised, it is likely that they are easily frightened and frequently cry. Since in this area missionaries are based in Tobaa tam and rarely visit villages or hamlets except for the Holy Week, almost all O'dam babies are baptised at this time.<sup>71</sup> To ensure the baby's protection, parents and godparents can perform the baptism by themselves at home, by putting 'holy water' (collected from sacred springs) on the baby's chest using a tassel of cotton. This Baptism has to be renewed later on by the priest during his next visit to the village.

Among the O'dam, the institution of *compadrazgo* has no further implications or responsibilities in the individual's and the family's life, as it normally takes place for the majority of Mexicans (Mintz and Wolf 1950; Foster 1953).<sup>72</sup> Thus, choosing specific individuals as *compadres* is not very important among the O'dam. In fact, almost all *compadres* are 'invited' by the parents just before the communal baptism celebrated on Holy Saturday.<sup>73</sup> It is common for adults to baptize many children during their lives and to have many *compadres* and godchildren.<sup>74</sup> As Foster (1953: 7) observes in Spanish America in general, the emphasis of the *compadrazgo* rests on the relation between the two *compadres* rather than between the godparent and godchild. Considering the godchild's parents as ego, among the O'dam the relation is extended to all their

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<sup>70</sup> In recent years the Catholic Church has managed to penetrate more deeply into indigenous lives and there are people who take communion. Nevertheless, this is quite limited to those villages where missionaries are settled and allowed to live.

<sup>71</sup> It has been like this since colonial times when these villages were '*pueblos de visita*' (Gerhard 1982: 214). By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lumholtz (1902: 467) explains a similar situation when visiting San Francisco de Lajas where the priest used to visit two or three times a year. Similarly Mason (1948: 295), who did fieldwork at San José de Xoconoxtle, reported that the priest from Mezquital used to visit the village once a year in May, baptising children and marrying people.

<sup>72</sup> Foster (1953: 24) proposes that the success of *compadrazgo* in central Mexico may be due to its coincidence with a pre-Hispanic indigenous clan system.

<sup>73</sup> Riley (1969: 821) reported that in San José de Xoconoxtle two sets of *padrinos* were chosen: one for baptising the neonate on the day of birth by bestowing a Christian name and then another five days later when the placenta is buried.

<sup>74</sup> Benítez (1980: 85) states there was a rule (unconfirmed) that each O'dam individual should have at least 20 *compadres*.

children and to their potential new spouses (in the case of separation). Godparents are addressed as *pa'riin* or *mariin* by all the godchildren's siblings, and new spouses say *compadre* or *comadre* to the couples' former *compadres*.

As a child the relationship with church deities depends to a large extent on their parents' relation to these. Normally children attend church with their parents and their Christian duties extend little beyond this. Nevertheless, there are special *cargos* or positions at church that children hold, as described in the next section. All children (can) also participate, in two festivals at church where they have a special and relevant participation: the Holy Week and the Day of the Dead. In Juktir, as well as in those villages that belong to the community of Santa María de Ocotán, children gather at church during the morning of Good Thursday and Good Friday. During the seven processions over these two days, children are in the role of '*judíos*', Jews, and they create noise around the procession in the effort to cause obstruction (Reyes 2006a: 180). The rest of the time during this celebration the children are 'Christianised' by learning how to cross themselves, and they receive instruction at church by the *pixkalh* (*fiscal*, sacristan) and the *tupil* (assistant), the church officiants (Chapter 5).

On the Day of the Dead (*Santur tam*), the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> of November to the morning of the following day, the children in Juktir and Kauxbilhim participate in a game in which the village is 'under their control'. At sunset, children accompanied by the *pixkalh* and the *tupil*, walk around the village and visit each house asking for *chilacayotes* (*Cucurbita ficifolia*). In Juktir, children are allowed to take the *chilacayotes* left in the graveyard as offerings for their dead relatives. Then children divide themselves into two groups and each goes to a landmark in the village. In Juktir these are the front yard of the church and the courthouse.<sup>75</sup> Children reunite at the church and represent the local courthouse officers and the *comuneros* while the group at the courthouse become the municipality's authority and the police. During the night, both groups of children try to steal *chilacayotes* which they call 'bulls'. The robbers are captured by the police and put into jail where they must pay a fine using play money to be released. Both groups exchange letters via emissaries, which

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<sup>75</sup> At Kauxbilhim one group goes to the *convento* (a building in front of the church), while the other goes to the courthouse.

discuss and exhibit local political issues such as land disputes or drug trafficking problems. In the early morning the children roast and eat the *chilacayotes* which they collected during the night. At sunrise the game ends and the children return the authority to the adults who go back to the courthouse.

#### WORSHIPPING THE CHURCH GODS. TEMPORARY AND LIFELONG RELATIONSHIPS

In the context of church it is possible to identify two types of relationship between human beings and deities: these are temporary and lifelong relations. I define temporary relationships as those that people establish for temporarily discrete and specific purposes, such as asking a deity for a particular favour. As soon as the favour has been granted and the debt paid, the relationship is terminated.<sup>76</sup> Among these temporary relations it is possible to identify which are established by: *pasioners* ('passion holders'), visitors, *mayordomos*, dancers,<sup>77</sup> church officiants (*pixkalh* and *tupil*) and the courthouse officers (Chapter 4). Lifelong relations are, on the other hand, initialized by the gods choosing people to serve them for the rest of their lives. In such cases, gods reveal their wishes through the dreams of healers. In Juktir, lifelong relations are held by the *kokprat*<sup>78</sup> and the church officials (the *mandante* and the *bakirux*).<sup>79</sup> These positions correspond to those introduced during colonial times through the *cofradías*, guilds or brotherhoods, also known in Mexico as *mayordomías*.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> However, it is common that people get ill because they did not fulfil deities' expectations as payment for their favors. This is only known later thanks to the intervention of a healer.

<sup>77</sup> Except in Chianarkam where to be a church dancer is lifelong responsibility.

<sup>78</sup> Singular *kopraat*, from Spanish *cofrade*, *cofradía* or a guild member.

<sup>79</sup> Note that I make the distinction between church 'officers' and 'officials'. The former correspond to those positions that are annually or triennially renewed (Chapter 4); and the latter are positions denoting lifelong commitment.

<sup>80</sup> Generally speaking, these religious organizations in Mexico congregate lay people for the cult of a specific patron saint, sponsoring and taking care of their festivals. Recruitment and membership vary widely resulting in diverse types of *cofradías*. For instance, there are *cofradías*: open to anyone; for men or for women only; or to which access is assured through inheritance, and so on. As a general rule, the membership is for life or for as long the *cofrades* fulfil their responsibilities (Moreno 1999: 26-38; Cf. Carrera et al. 2011).

**The *pasioner* and the *tupil*.** These positions are especially destined to be fulfilled by children who are 7-8 years old or 12 to a maximum age of 14 years. The *pasioner* (Spanish, *pasionero*) ‘the passion holders’, is a position held by a boy at Juktir and by a boy and a girl at Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim. The ‘passion’ is a ceremonial object which at Juktir seems to be an old relic wrapped in a red kerchief. At Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim the ‘passions’ are flags or banners displaying a cross, crowned with a small metal or a wooden cross on the top of the shaft. Alongside ‘the passion’, the *pasioners* hold a small bell in the right hand. A red kerchief is worn to cover the head and neck, with another rolled and tied around the head like a crown, the *pasioners* ring the bell during saints’ processions at festivals and when they visit houses in the village and vicinities.



**Image 11 The *pasioner* from Juktir holding ‘the passion’ and the bell**

The children’s commitment is different depending on where this takes place. In Juktir the boy is randomly selected by the *pixkalh* at each festival. In Kauxbilhim the positions must be held by the same pair of children for a whole year, and it is expected that they will become *pasioners* again four more times. Here the children are selected by the elders while at Chianarkam this is the *pixkalh*’s assignment. The criterion here is that the children must be able to walk, but



must not be older than five years. Since the *pasioners* have to be present at any church celebration, in these two places the elders find it convenient to select children living in the village or close by. Besides their duties, the *pasioners* have the privilege of receiving meals when they accompany the saints to the houses, and they are also allowed to eat the food that patron saints receive as offerings.

The *tupil* is a position belonging to the *cargo* system of each community and, with the exception of Juktir, it is renewed yearly.<sup>81</sup> The *tupil*'s duties are to assist the *pixkalh* in cleaning the church and ringing the church bells during the patron saints' processions<sup>82</sup> and every day: three times in the morning, once at noon, and once again in the afternoon.<sup>83</sup>

**The Visitors.** Visiting the gods at church establishes the less demanding type of relation between deities and people. People visit them at church in order to request simple favours regarding general welfare, or more elaborated demands such as successful stock breeding, success at school, or in politics. The bigger the favour, the more one owes the gods. Thus, it can be a single visit to church, such as in festivals, or visiting the church every Friday for five or seven weeks in what is known as 'Counting Fridays'. It is possible to visit the saints at almost any time. In Chianarkam people state that patron saints never sleep and they receive visits day and night.<sup>84</sup> However, except for the eve of a festival, when people spend the night in the church holding vigil over the patron saints, nocturnal visits are considered engagements with the dark patrons, the *jix bham na gim*, 'the fierce ones', who fast track favours but, who also charge with dead in the case of failure.

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<sup>81</sup> In Juktir the *tupil* is an adult and the position is renewed every three years along with the other courthouse officers (Chapter 4).

<sup>82</sup> As well as when a body is moved to the graveyard.

<sup>83</sup> In Juktir, except for Sundays, the *tupil* rings the bells every day at 6, 7 and 8 in the morning, at noon, and at 4, 5 and 6 in the afternoon. In Kauxbilhim, this is done on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, three times an hour between 8 and 9 (for instance at 8, 8:20 and 8:40) in the morning; and three times between noon and 1pm. During the festivals this is done in the same way, but also between 5pm and 6pm. In Chianarkam the *tupil* rings the bells on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, as well as in the morning during festivals: when the sun reaches Ku'kpara tam, The Doors, located in the western mountain; when the sun reaches the *xiotalh* patio; and when it reaches the front yard of the church, between 7am and 10am depending on the time of the year.

<sup>84</sup> It's worth saying that, by contrast, in Au'dam (Southwest Tepehuan) village San Francisco de Lajas, Aicha'm, church officiants 'put patron saints to sleep' every evening at 7pm by covering the statues with a piece of fabric. Then they wake them up at 4am in the morning.

Visitors ask the gods to look out for their general welfare by offering flowers, candles, coins and prayers. This keeps the relation at its minimum but still demands holding abstinences during the time of the visit and five days after. The visitor's protocol is usually quite simple: they silently enter the church without hats on; kneel in front of the altar and cross themselves; put flowers and money at the feet of patron saints, respecting the rule that only men are allowed to step on the altar steps to reach those statues placed higher up; light a candle; and pray silently while the candle consumes itself; cross themselves again, stand up and quietly leave the church.

Big favours demand holding abstinences during prolonged periods of time by Counting Fridays or by becoming *mayordomo*. Counting Fridays consist of visiting a patron saint over five consecutive weeks, every Thursday evening and spending the night there until Friday morning. During the night, visitors light candles and offer hot chocolate to the deities<sup>85</sup>. The next morning, when the chocolate has cooled down, visitors distribute it among other visitors and they drink it. This procedure is repeated for four years more and at the end of the fifth year, visitors sacrifice a calf in honour of the saints.

When Counting Fridays is to ask favours specifically of Jesus Christ, it implies a seven week term instead. The most powerful patrons at church are the 'couple of Christ', and this power is greater still in their avocation of *el Santo Entierro*, the Holy Sepulchre, the dead version and their dark side. Since the Holy Sepulchre is venerated during the Holy Week, the period of Counting Fridays must coincide with Lent ending on Good Friday. After this, the *odhargan* (or re-incorporation term) must be held during an equivalent period of time.

**The *mayordomos*.** The *mayordomos* or *fiesteros* (the ones having *fiesta*) are the festival sponsors. Their name in O'dam, *duñiipia'kam*, literally means the 'ones who have jobs' (Willett 1996: 198). They pay for church decorations, dance costumes, fireworks and a communal meal which includes calf. However, such expenses are just the pinnacle of the work, since the labour of cult practice

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<sup>85</sup> Chocolate for offering is prepared by melting dark chocolate bars in hot water with sugar and topped with animal crackers.

towards a specific patron saint lasts for a complete year. During this time they must fulfil different duties such as cleaning the church, lighting candles therein and increasing the patron saints' wardrobes, as well as changing them into clean clothes at each festival (Reyes 2010b: 65, 89). Being a *mayordomos* is very expensive and the lack of local employment, is the main reason for temporary labour migration, particularly to the Pacific coast where the O'dam (and other indigenous people in the area) work on mestizo owned plantations.

It is expected that every O'dam becomes a *mayordomo* five times in a lifetime. This is part of the 'original debt' O'dam people acquired from deities in mythological time. Consequently, when someone completes the responsibility for the first time, he or she looks to becoming a *mayordomo* for the second time as soon as possible. Among the O'dam the *mayordomías* are held by couples, most commonly by spouses. In Juktir I have witnessed festivals with two women taking on the responsibility but never two men. With the exception of Saint James, in Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim (as I explain below), every patron saint has four couples of *mayordomos*: two couples named 'majors' and two couples known as 'minors' or helpers. Among the former, one of the couples is the principal and they are identified as the 'actual majors'; the other is named *prioste* (from *preboste*, provost). Each couple of majors has its own couple of helpers (the 'minors'), who are known in Juktir as *diputados* (Reyes 2010b: 91).<sup>86</sup>



**Diagram 1 The structure of the *mayordomos***

<sup>86</sup> This Spanish word has different O'dam adaptations like: *deportado*, *teportado*, and *tepotaste*.

To become a *mayordomo* or *fiestero* a person, a man or woman<sup>87</sup> has to be chosen by one of the *mayordomos* in charge at the time. The selection is formalised during the preamble for the festival which can be agreed upon earlier between the current *mayordomo* and that person who is looking for the position. Given the enormity of the responsibility and the expense it implies, in Juktir (bearing in mind that more festivals are held in this area), it is common that people hide themselves away from the *fiesteros* whilst they are looking for new candidates. Prior to the festival, the *fiesteros* simply walk about the village, stopping people and asking them to be “new ones”. The protocol indicates that one must reject the offer at first and the *mayordomo* has to convince the other person. Once engaged in such a negotiation, it is accepted the prospects will not withdraw.

There are festivals in which people look forward to being *mayordomos* given the considerable power of the celebrated saints. These include the Holy Week (Jesus Christ), Saint James (25<sup>th</sup> of July), the Virgin of Nativity (8<sup>th</sup> of September), the Virgin Mary, La Purísima Concepción (8<sup>th</sup> of December) and the Virgin Guadalupe (12<sup>th</sup> of December). It is common that there are many candidates for these celebrations. The *mayordomos* in charge must decide to whom responsibility will be passed. This is normally the case for all celebrations in Kauxbilhim and Chianarkam, where there are only the five festivals mentioned above.

Once a *mayordomo* in charge has chosen his relief, they go to the courthouse where the *xibkam duñiipia'kam*, present the new *mayordomos*, to the authorities. The governor, or another experienced man delivers an address, known as *dar valor*, 'giving courage'. In his hand he holds the governor's staff of authority (*vara de autoridad*) and encourages the 'new ones' by saying:

Gentlemen, brothers, friends: I invite you and request your collaboration. As you know, the big day to celebrate Our Mother has arrived in our village, and you have been chosen to be *fiesteros* for the next year. I

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<sup>87</sup> In practice it is more common that men are considered to be *mayordomos* and they take on the responsibility along with their wives or another woman from the family.

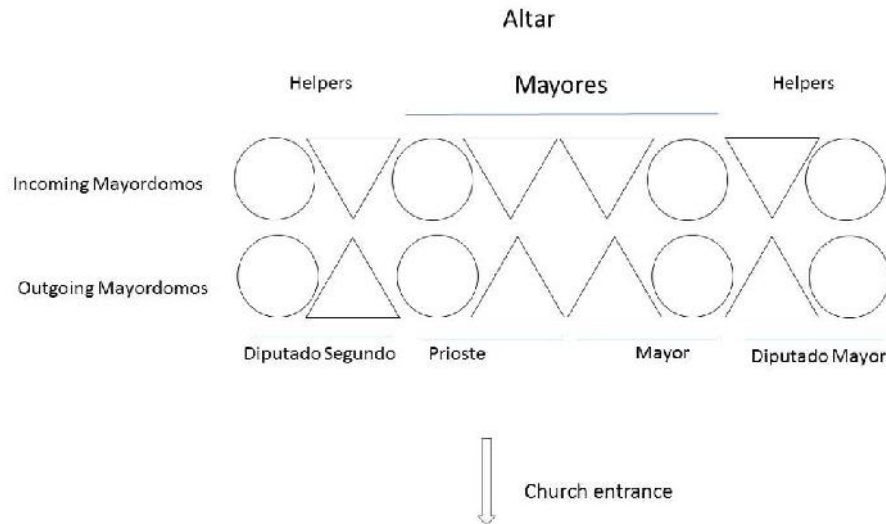
believe God himself has chosen you for that service. Since we [the authorities] are his voice, we are obliged to tell you it is not possible to refuse. You already know that you are sons of this village and that you were born as men to provide this service. It cannot be an outsider, but only you who are from here. Now, look at the life you have, because it is God who gives it to you to live peacefully at home with your families. Then you have to come to give your hand to Our Father God. We know there is nothing to fear; make it happily. It is God who speaks through us, because God's word and hand are on this table, at this courthouse, under this holy cross on the holy table. We as authorities have to fulfil our duties, telling you this in few and simple words. So be it. (Rosa 2003: 62).<sup>88</sup>

The speech can include information about the *fiestero's* responsibilities. After the speech, the *mayordomos* light a firework outside the courthouse indicating the designations of the 'new ones'. After this protocol, the new *fiesteros* begin an arduous year of work. This presentation in the courthouse normally occurs two days before the patron's patron saint's day. Later, on the morning of the eve of the celebration there is a new presentation in the church before the saints. To this end, the four couples of *mayordomos* and the incoming *fiesteros* meet in the church. Close to the door the *mayordomos* stand in a line with the majors at the centre and the helpers to the sides. In front of them the 'new ones' face the altar.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> My translation from Spanish. The speech can be a little different, depending on the specific person who is transmitting it.

<sup>89</sup> This actual orientation of the line can vary depending on the layout of the specific church. For instance, at Juktir where the nave runs along a north-south axis, the *mayordomos* place themselves along an east-west axis.



**Diagram 2 The *mayordomos* and the new *fiesteros* in the church**

The eight couples stand face to face. The male *mayordomos* hold a set of five wax candles<sup>90</sup>, while their female partners in one hand hold a *kobiamkar*, a clay incense burner with a clay plate inside for the incense powder; a small piece of hard *kupalh* (incense)<sup>91</sup> wrapped as a *timaich*; in the other hand they hold a set of five wax candles; and a grass broom in their arms. With the *pixkalh* and *tupil* sanctioning the act, the former instruct the two groups to greet by leaning their heads forward and right first, and then forward and left. Following this the *mayordomos* hand over all the mentioned items to the 'new ones'. During the celebrations of Saint John and Saint James they also give the 'new ones' a little chicken.

<sup>90</sup> Despite the fact that the O'dam use paraffin candles for many ritual actions, there are specific points at ceremonies where wax candles are strictly required.

<sup>91</sup> *Kopalh* is a resin obtained from *burseraceae* species.



**Image 12 *Mayordomos* holding brooms and candles**

During festivals the *mayordomos* are mainly responsible for preparing and serving meals for the saints, the dancers, the *pasionero(s)*, the courthouse authorities, church visitors and other people helping with their duties. The incoming *mayordomos*, on the other hand, remain in the church during most of the festival. They also light candles and carry the patron saints' sculptures. During these two days, the *mayordomos*, and those who relieve them have almost no time to sleep.

After two days of festivities, in the afternoon of the saint's day (about 2 or 3pm), the ceremony for the transfer of the *mayordomías* by 'handing-over the crowns and canes' takes place outside the courthouse. The outgoing *mayordomos* pass over to the incoming *fiesteros* the attributes which are invested in them: a crown made with *kipii*;<sup>92</sup> a sugar cane (around 2m long) with firecrackers attached to the top end; a *timaich* half a metre long (approximately); a rear leg from of a sacrificed calf; and a bucket of *atuulh* (Reyes 2006a: 56; Reyes 2010b: 60, 91; Cf. Willett 1996: 198). When the transfer is completed,

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<sup>92</sup> This is a sweet dough made with honey and toasted corn flour (*tuisap*) or toasted amaranth. It is normally corn husk - wrapped and consumed during festivals after being as an offering at church or at the end of the festival after the new ones share it out with the audience.

the new *mayordomos* light the cracker on the top of the canes as an indication of the transfer. This is repeated inside the chapel where the new *mayordomos* also receive beef stew and tortillas. Afterwards, they distribute all the food (keeping some for themselves) among all the people.

The day after the festival, the new *mayordomos* in Juktir meet with their predecessors at the courthouse and with the church officiants to receive the wardrobe of the patron and the alms that the outgoing *mayordomos* collected during the year. They count and register these,<sup>93</sup> and the new *mayordomos* receive the assignment and increase the value of same. Afterwards, everyone goes to the church where they listen to a speech from the *pixkalh* who thanks everyone for their participation. From then on, the new *mayordomos* start Counting Fridays to become fully initiated in their relation with the patron saints.

**The dancers and the Santiago Knights.** The *ninidam* or dancers are a group of eight adult men who, accompanied by two musicians, perform choreographed dances during festivals to honour the church deities. The dances they perform correspond to those generally known in Mexico, Guatemala and Peru as *matachines*. They are historically affiliated with the Iberian Moors and Christian dances, which emerged in Mexico under the tradition of the Dances of Conquest (Bonfiglioli and Jáuregui 1996: 10-12).<sup>94</sup> Although the Spanish conquest is only marginally visible in the *nini'dam* performances, as I describe below the dancers' internal organization, their hierarchy, and some details of their performances reveal aspects of the conflict.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> This does not guarantee efficient accounting. I witnessed several times how a person in charge of counting is not able to properly do it in Spanish and the number is easily altered. This situation seems not to be relevant.

<sup>94</sup> Some features of the Dances of Conquest are dance dramatizations of the Conquest of Mexico presenting the conflict between the indigenous and the Spanish or as with their Iberian predecessors of Christians against the Moors, the true faith against the pagans (Bonfiglioli and Jáuregui 1996: 15).

<sup>95</sup> Bonfiglioli (1996: 255) defines the Tarahumara *matachines* of northern Mexico in a similar way. Here he finds an indirect link to the Dances of Conquest since they develop the subject of conflict from a particular indigenous perspective. Furthermore, the author considers there is a genealogical or historical link between the Tarahumara *matachines* and Dances of Conquest, but it does not imply *per se* any current significance (Bonfiglioli 1995: 170).



The *nini'dam* group is arranged in two parallel lines composed of four men each. The more experienced dancers of the group, the leaders, stand at the front of each line. They state that their champion is Jesus on the cross at the church and that he expresses his wishes through the dreams of their leaders (Reyes 2006a: 160). The dancer at the head of the right line (from their own perspective) is named *malinche* and the one at the head of the left line is called *monarca*, monarch. These names allude to the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Malinalli or “*La Malinche*” the indigenous woman allied with Cortés, the Spanish conqueror, and who in popular opinion is considered a traitor. On the other hand the monarch refers to Moctezuma, the Aztec sovereign (Jáuregui 1996: 38).

The dancers wear the common O'dam white cotton clothes, sandals, a bandana covering the top of the head and a crown made of cardboard and colourful tissue paper. At Juktir they also use a bright cape. All these clothes are provided by the *mayordomos*. In their right hand, they bear a metallic rattle while in their left they hold the 'palm' (Reyes 2006a: 161). Among Mexican *matachines* the 'palm' is a sort of wooden hand rake, emulating palm leaves, but among the O'dam this is a wooden handle with an elliptical wire hoop (about 20cm at its widest aperture) wrapped in bright, colourful tinsel.



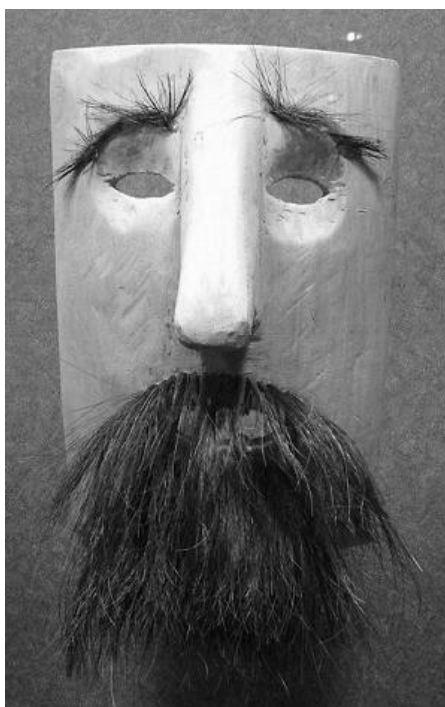
**Image 13 Juktir dancer**

Each choreographed dance is accompanied by a musical piece of the *son* genre played by a guitarist and a violinist.<sup>96</sup> In Juktir, the monarch Flavio Reyes affirms there are 43 *sones* in their repertoire, which are difficult to perform completely in a particular festival given the participation of new dancers who must first master the basic *sones*. The basic *sones*, normally executed at the beginning of each festival are: the *Bo'mkox* (type of squirrel), the Small Cross, the Big Cross, the Goat, and the Sheep. In Chianarkam the *sones* are: *tidilik* (unknown meaning), *jiman i'ichim* (unknown meaning), *bibi't* (whirlwind), *machich* (machete), *jik pa'* (unknown meaning), *tukuur* (owl) and *kurtii* (unknown meaning).

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<sup>96</sup> The so call *son* music in Mexico exhibits different music styles from different regions around the country. There are different types of *son* which makes it difficult to describe generically. This genre of music is performed by small ensembles in which string instruments like guitars and violins predominate. The word *son* literally means 'sound', and it was used in Colonial times to differentiate between *música*, alluding to church music, and *son*, the 'sounds' produced for everybody else (Kuri-Aldana and Mendoza 1996).

Alongside the dancers there are one or two 'ritual clowns' known as *ja'ook* ('devil').<sup>97</sup> Their attributes include a wooden carved mask with a pronounced nose, an abundant moustache and a beard made using horse hair from the mane revealing their mestizo character. They also carry an *otate* cane (*Otatea acuminata aztecorum*) as a walking stick by using the hardened roots, which can also be used as a hobby horse. He represents the dark side of the dancers who, on the other hand, are characterized by solar and luminous attributes. During the performances, the *ja'ook* makes fun of the dancers and the audience.<sup>98</sup>



**Image 14 *Ja'ook* mask (Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico)**

Men normally get involved as *nini'dam* when they reach adulthood, between 12 and 14 years old. There are, however, exceptions such as the current monarch who began performing when he was only seven. Engaging with the dance group can be personal initiative or by invitation by the *mayordomo*. Either way,

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<sup>97</sup> O'dam people frequently interchange the words *diablo*, devil, and *ja'ook*. Nevertheless, the character of this O'dam devil does not correspond to the Christian conception. In fact, the word *ja'ook* seems to be a cognate with the Pima-Papago (Tohono O'odham and Akimel O'odham) word Ho'ok, meaning a 'dangerous being' who used to hurt people. In the Pima-Papago, Ho'ok is burnt on a bonfire which kills him (Saxton and Saxton 1973: 253-261). Chu'hul is killed in a similar way during a *xio'talh* in O'dam mythology (see Hobgood 1968).

<sup>98</sup> In Kauxbilhim it is common that the *ja'ook* gets drunk while the *nini'dam* perform.

the commitment is for at least five years, with the exception of Chianarkam where this is a lifelong relation. During this time, the beginners take their position at the rear and advance progressively to the front of the line as they become more experienced.

During the two days prior to the festival and wearing ordinary clothes, (jeans and T-shirts) the dancers and the musicians meet twice a day in the chapel for rehearsals. Later, during the festivals, the dancers perform before the patron saints in the chapel, the courthouse, and the church, and accompany every patron saint's procession ahead of the parade. Their most relevant and demanding performance is the eve of the saint's day when they dance for the entire night ending up exhausted.

The bright outfits worn by the dancers are an expression of their luminous character provided by a strong association with Jesus. This is particularly evident during Christmas and the Holy Week celebrations when they help Jesus to be born and resurrected. On Christmas Eve they perform in the church while all the visitors expect the birth of baby Jesus. About 1am they stop for a moment and divide into two groups, they go to the altar where the Virgin Immaculate Conception is located. The dancers encircle the virgin as well as a nativity set at her feet. Blocking the vision of the other assistants, the monarch carefully takes out a baby Jesus sculpture from the virgin's skirt and gently places it in the manger (Reyes 2006a: 163). At Chianarkam, the Virgin Immaculate Conception and the Baby Jesus sculptures are also attached by an 'umbilical cord' made with popcorn stringed in a thread. The monarch cuts the cord and later in the morning, the courthouse officers go to the church 'to know if the new-born is a boy or a girl'.

During the Holy Week, the dancers are absent during the time Jesus remains dead in the Holy Sepulchre and they only show themselves at the time of his resurrection.<sup>99</sup> On the morning of Holy Saturday, the dancers appear for the first time at the celebration wearing new immaculate white outfits. When the church officials open the church doors for the Glory, the dancers immediately go

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<sup>99</sup> The Tepehuan, as well as the other indigenous groups in the Gran Nayar region, hold the tradition of the resurrection of Jesus on Holy Saturday instead of Sunday, as it was before the 1952 liturgical reformation.

to the Holy Sepulchre (constructed with bamboo canes) and destroy it. After this, the church officiants return the crucifixes to their place on the altar (Reyes 2006a: 164) surrounded by a festive environment with the bells ringing, the musicians playing and the *mayordomos* burning incense.

The festivals of Saint John (24<sup>th</sup> of June) and Saint James (25<sup>th</sup> of July) stand out in the liturgical calendar because of the *ninidam* absence and the presence of the 'Saint James knights'. This is a group of horsemen alluding to the figure of Saint James as the Moor Slayer.<sup>100</sup> They accompany the patron saints' processions instead of the dancers and participate in 'running the rooster'. This is a race where two horsemen (three in Chianarkam) compete against each other to catch a rooster. One of them holds the animal by its legs while the other tries to snatch it. After a couple of laps on around the circuit, the roosters get quartered. In Kauxbilhim, the *fiesteros* free the roosters in the village first and the horsemen try to capture them. In Santiago Teneraca it is common that some of the roosters survive and the winning horseman keeps them. Saint James knight's character contrasts to the dancers in many ways: the dancers are a solemn structured group with a long term commitment, while Saint James knights engage only for one particular festival and demonstrate their lack of solemnness by drinking *mezcal* during the celebration.

The positions of the festivals of Saint John and Saint James in the ritual cycle falls in the rainy season characterising them as rain festivals. The festival of Saint John inaugurates the wet season in Juktir and people state that this is the latest date for sowing the fields. The festival is close to the summer solstice and the horsemen of Saint James portray themselves as aquatic agents lessening the solar entities embodied by the roosters that they try to kill.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Santiago Matamoros, Saint James Moor Slayer is the patron saint of Spain and it was under this avocation that the cult was introduced into the Americas during colonial times (Cf. Medina 2013: 111).

<sup>101</sup> *Mezcal* consumption as well as drunkenness is associated with the coming rains (Cf. Benítez 1980: 197; Reyes 2006a: 167). Among the Cora, the relation between the rooster and Jesus is clearer during Holy Week celebrations. Here, the chick is carried in the procession on Friday as a sign that Jesus Christ has not really been killed (Coyle 1998: 531).

Dancers	Saint James knights
Solar-luminous association	Rains-dark association
Contribute to Jesus' birth and resurrection	Destroy solar symbols, sun death
Winter Solstice association (the sun birth)	Summer solstice association (the sun death)
Structured long term commitment	Individual spontaneous participation
Arduous ritual work	Joyful game
Soberness and solemnity	Drunkenness and transgression

**Table 5 The dancers and the Saint James knights contrast**

At these festivals the *mayordomos* wear hats and their clothes are embellished with a cross on the chest and back, alluding to the order of Saint James. In Chianarkam called Santiago Teneraca in Spanish and where Saint James is the tutelary deity, there is a fifth couple of *fiesteros* known as *sirvientes*, the servants. The male *sirviente* leads the other four in their activities during the festival and people state that he receives orders directly from Saint James (Reyes 2010b: 66). In Kauxbilhim this *mayordomía* is even more complex since there are eight couples of *mayordomos*: two majors (where one is the 'actual major') and two *diputados*, all of them with the privilege of riding horses during the festivals; and four couples of helpers who walk.



**Diagram 3 *Mayordomos*, Saint James Festival at Santiago Teneraca**



**Image 15 Horsemen at Santiago Teneraca**



**Image 16 Horsemen at Santa María de Ocotán**



**Lifelong relationships: the *kokprat*.** Lifelong relationships with the church gods are held by people selected by the Jesus Christ. At Juktir, the only place where the *kokprat* currently exist,<sup>102</sup> they are responsible for visiting the church during festivals and incense is burned during the patron saints processions alongside the new *mayordomos*, creating an aromatic path for the procession. They are also in charge of washing the saint's clothes at the stream in Juktir on Holy Saturday. Furthermore, they have the role of handling dead bodies, and have the capacity to deal with the death.<sup>103</sup>

Similar to what happens to shaman novices during their initiation (Chapter 3), the people destined to be *kopraat* have suffered from illnesses, normally in their childhood. The main symptom is an intense head or arm pain, which the healer interprets as the pain caused by the thorny crown worn by Jesus, meaning that the Jich Xoi'kam is reclaiming this person into his service. For this reason one of the *kokprat* emblems is a red kerchief that is worn around the head and around the left arm. To be healed, the ill person must become a *koprat* by Counting Fridays for five years (not consecutive) and after by holding a retreat in the forest, for five weeks, five times in their life, in the same way that shamans do (Chapter 3). If the person destined to fulfil this duty does not attend to the demands of the gods, he or she will be ill again and eventually die.

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<sup>102</sup> Old people in Chianarkam told me that they heard that these *kokprat* existed in the past, but that they never knew them. In Kauxbilhim, on the other hand, people state that there used to be a *kopraat* who was a man in charge of looking after the cattle belonging to the church, like the *bakirux* at Juktir (see below) but that currently this is the *pixkalh*'s work.

<sup>103</sup> While the former responsibilities are fulfilled by the *mayordomos* in Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim, in the former the *pixkalh* is qualified to handle dead bodies, while in Kauxbilhim there is currently a woman who was a former *mayordomo* taking care of them.





**Image 17 The *kokprat* and the *mayordomos* washing the saints' clothes on Holy Saturday, Juktir.**

**Lifelong relationships: the Church Officials.** The *mandante* and the *bakirux* are lifelong positions at church in Juktir. The *mandante*, 'the ruler' is the highest authority in the church (Reyes 2006a: 78; 2010a: 88), this contrasts with his discrete participation in festivals. He acts as an advisor<sup>104</sup> since he is the most knowledgeable person regarding the rituals conducted in the church, and to this extent he is in charge of safeguarding this tradition. He is also the *kokprat*'s leader and responsible for assuring their participation in festivals.

The *bakirux*, Spanish *vaquero*, cowboy, is in charge of looking after the Virgin of Nativity's cattle<sup>105</sup> that she receives as offerings when visiting people's houses. The *bakirux* takes care of the cattle on communal land and he also

<sup>104</sup> From 1999 to 2000, when I conducted intensive fieldwork at Juktir for my BA thesis (published later as Reyes 2006a), the *mandante*'s participation was limited to the Holy Week celebration and to the communal *xiotalh*. His presence was also relevant in the firsts festivals for Our Lady of Candles and Saint Anthony of Padua in 2000, giving all the directions for the new celebrations (Reyes 2006a: 57-59). It is worth mentioning that at that time, the *mandante* was also a prominent local politician and for that reason he passed much time in Durango City.

<sup>105</sup> This responsibility is very similar to one of *cofradía*'s main functions at the colonial period, before their abolition in Mexico in 1959, which is keeping brotherhood's goods (Chance and Taylor 1985: 8, 17).

milks the cows to make cheese. He distributes the cheese among the participants in the ceremony to bless the corn, celebrated in the communal *xiotalh* patio on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August, as well as in the festival of Saint Francis on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October.

The current *bakirux* was designated by the former *bakirux* before he died in the early 1990s. People at Juktir assure that the former *bakirux* used to take the Virgin to visit the houses from December to March at places like Los Charcos, Canoas, Llano Grande, and other places when it was required, and that during that time the Virgin was wealthy in both cattle and money. When the former *bakirux* died, they had about 30 head of cattle held by a temporary *bakirux*. Currently the responsibilities of *mandante* and *bakirux* fall to the same person after the former *mandante's* death. It was the former *mandante* who designated the current *mandante* after he dreamed the latter was the chosen one.

#### THE CHURCH AND COURTHOUSE'S FESTIVALS

*Fiestas* or festivals for patron saints bring together many people from many places. In the analysis of these celebrations, it is important to make a distinction between what I call their 'ludic sides' from their 'solemn sides'. On the 'ludic side', people engage in *la fiesta*, visiting relatives and revelling in the party, enjoying live music and getting drunk. Engaging with this facet of the festival does not involve any kind of commitment, nor does worshipping or holding ritual abstinences. This is what Willett (1996) observes when she characterizes the Tepehuan 'folk Christian fiestas', leading her to set a sharp opposition between Christian festivals and the *xiotalh* ceremonies. She argues that while drunkenness and promiscuity prevail in the former, in the *xiotalh* such behaviours are strictly forbidden. But she is not looking at the 'festival's core', its 'solemn side'. This results in a limited understanding of the celebration, since during church festivals the people involved hold similar abstinences to those held in *xiotalh* ceremonies.

Each communal *cabecera*, as well as other villages in the communities, have a 'traditional'<sup>106</sup> church with its particular celebration calendar arranged according to the Catholic liturgical calendar. However, each church observes different celebrations. Beside the *cabeceras* there are 'traditional' churches in Candelaria del Alto (Koba'ram), San José Xoconostle (Nakaab tam), Aguila Zarca (Kokma' Suudai'), Agua Prieta (Tuk Suudai), Cerro de las Papas (Yatuicha'm) and Canoas (Kanubas). In the community of Santiago Teneraca there is a church at San Miguel de las Mesas with similar features (Reyes 2006b: 13). These churches have at least two celebrations: patron saint festivals and the Holy Week.

Many of these festivals in the communal *cabeceras* presumably come from colonial times as well as the buildings. The patron saints in these churches, the sculptures and their avocations, correspond to those cults introduced in this area by the Franciscan order, probably in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in the form of *cofradías* (Vallebuena 2009a: 14; 2009b: 77). However, as mentioned earlier, there are new cults such as Our Lady of Candles and Saint Anthony of Padua, introduced in 2000 to Santa María de Ocotán (Reyes 2006a: 57-59) as well as San Juan Diego (9<sup>th</sup> of December) in 2003.<sup>107</sup>

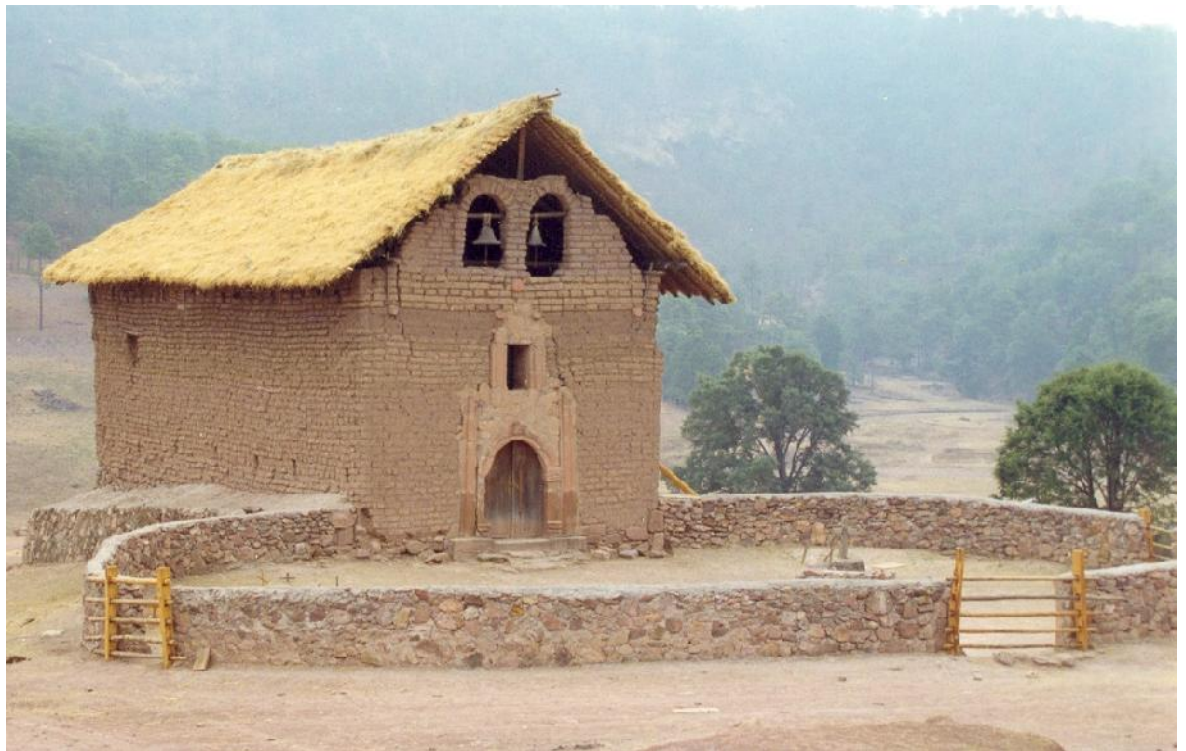
The ritual cycle in these churches exhibits and emphasizes the contrast between the rainy and the dry seasons. As mentioned before, the festivals of Saint John and Saint James, at the beginning of the rainy season, highlight these aquatic aspects. The Virgin of Nativity is also known as 'Nativity of rains'; and at the end of the wet season the first crops are presented during Saint Francis festival and the Day of the Dead. This contrast is also noticed in the solar aspect of the courthouse officers and their relation to the dry season. For

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<sup>106</sup> I designate here as 'traditional' to those churches founded presumably in colonial times (although some of them were refurbished) or are mainly controlled by O'dam themselves and follow the ritual in the way it was learned and developed mainly in colonial times. For instance, there is a church established 1991 in San Miguel de las Mesas which, despite its recent foundation, is fully controlled by O'dam, it has its own officers, and the architecture is like the traditional old churches (Reyes 2006b: 13, 17). In contrast, there are in the region those churches introduced in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century alongside the establishment of the wood industry in the region. These churches are in the hands of 'official' catholic priests, who celebrate mass as the current liturgy indicates and are mainly frequented by Mexicans.

<sup>107</sup> San Juan Diego, who was the Indian Virgin of Guadalupe appears to for the first time in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, became the first American Indian ever canonized.

instance, the celebrations on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January as well as on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, during the dry season, are related to the election and the relief of the courthouse officers (Chapter 4). Another set of celebrations is linked with the life of Jesus: Christmas, Carnival and Holy Week. The following table enumerates the church celebrations at each *cabecera* from the three communities I am approaching here Santa María de Ocotán, San Francisco de Ocotán, and Santiago Teneraca: Juktir, Kauxbilhim, and Chianarkam.



**Image 18 Kauxbilhim's church**

Date	Celebration	Juktir	Kauxbilhim	Chianarkam
1st January	New Year/ handing-over-of-the-staffs	(+)	(+)	(+)
2nd February	Our Lady of Candles	(+)	(-)	(-)
Lent and Holy Week	“Ash-Thursday” Carnival	(+)	(-)	(-)
	Friday of Sorrows (Virgin of Sorrows)	(+)	(-)	(-)
	Holy Week	(+)	(+)	(+)
3th May	Holy Cross	(-)	(-)	(+)
25th May	<i>Sasab cha'm</i>	(-)	(+)	(+)
13th June	San Anthony of Padua	(+)	(-)	(-)
24th June	Saint John the Baptist	(+)	(-)	(-)
25th July	Saint James	(+)	(+)	(+)
8th September	Virgin of Nativity	(+)	(-)	(+)
29th September	Saint Michael	(+)	(-)	(-)
4th October	Saint Francis of Assisi	(+)	(+)	(+)
1st and 2nd November	<i>Santur tam</i> . All Saints Day's/Day of the Death	(+)	(+)	(+)
8th December	Virgin Immaculate Conception	(+)	(-)	(-)
9th December	Saint Juan Diego	(+)	(-)	(-)
12th December	Virgin of Guadalupe	(+)	(+)	(-)
24th December	Christmas eve	(+)	(+)	(+)

**Table 6 Church Celebrations in the O'dam communal *cabeceras***

Shadowed rows correspond to the rainy season festivals

As displayed in the table, only the celebrations corresponding to the patron saint festivals have their own particular set of *mayordomos*. In the other cases, the organization and expenses are assumed either by the courthouse authorities, like in the New Year celebrations, or by all the *mayordomos* as with the Day of the Dead, and Christmas. The Saint Francis day festival takes place in the three *cabeceras*, where there are no *mayordomos* at Kauxbilhim but regarding the other two *cabeceras*, the *fiesteros* from all the other festivals congregate in the village to offer boiled corn on the cob to the saints which are distributed among the people. The Holy Cross day (3<sup>th</sup> of May) is exceptionally celebrated in Santiago Teneraca, in a similar situation. There are no *mayordomos* but, those from other festivals, meet on this day at church and clean the patron saint's sculpture with wet cotton cloths.<sup>108</sup> During celebrations without *mayordomos* there are no cattle sacrifices either.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May at Kauxbilhim and Chianarkam, during the celebration known as the *Sasab cha'm*, (the music festival), the outgoing courthouse authorities complete the transfer of responsibilities to the new authorities elected months before and they also handover offers of cattle, sugar cane, *titmaich* and crowns. Further on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January there was also the 'handing over of the staffs of authority' at the courthouse to the new authorities. At Chianarkam they also celebrate the Virgin of Sorrow and for this festival the outgoing courthouse officers correspond with the *mayordomos*. At Juktir, where the courthouse officers are renewed every three years, the handing over of these gifts occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January as well as the transfer of the staffs of authority (Chapter 4).

Festivals can vary from celebration to celebration and from *cabecera* to *cabecera*. Since my particular interest here is to highlight the ways people follow and interact with deities and given that I have already described the different moments in the festivals while talking about the participants, I describe the general frame by focusing on the activities of the outgoing *mayordomos*. With this in mind, I take Juktir festivals as a base given their regularity and the fact that I know these better.

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<sup>108</sup> In 1988 this celebration was introduced to the local church in Cerro de las Papas, Yatui cha'm, belonging to the community of Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle. Here, differently from Chianarkam, there is a set of *mayordomos* in charge.

The church officiants direct all the church festivals. As with the *pixkalh* and the *tupil* it is expected that the *mandante* participates. Sometimes the Franciscan priests from the near village and mission of Tobaa tam participate in the celebrations, but this is limited to accompanying the processions, praying, and singing hymns. In any case, the priests must ask the permission of the courthouse officers for their participation.<sup>109</sup>

In general, festivals consist of three days of festivities starting two days before the patron saint's day. Exceptionally in Juktir a fourth day is required for the handover of the saints' wardrobe by the outgoing *mayordomos* to the new *mayordomos*. Several days in advance the *mayordomos* collect firewood and all the items required for preparing meals during the forthcoming days. Five days in advance, except for the festivals of Saint John and Saint James, the *nini'dam* start the rehearsals and the *mayordomos* provide them with meals at each session, in the morning and in the evening.

On the first day of the celebration, the four couples of *mayordomos* meet at church in the morning (about 9am) to decorate the inside of the church and to place a set of five candles (about 30cm long x 4cm in diameter) each, on the altar table and decorated with mylar. The two major *mayordomos* set four of their candles at the centre of the altar, with the 'actual major' to the right and the *prioste* on the left (standing in front of the altar), and their respective helpers do the same on the sides. A fifth candle is placed in the chandeliers by each: the majors stand at each side of the altarpiece, while the helpers put the mobile wood chandeliers on each side of the altar table.<sup>110</sup> The new *fiesteros* will light these candles the next day in the evening. The *mayordomos* also decorate the inside of the church with coloured crepe paper.

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<sup>109</sup> To my knowledge, this permission has never been denied. However, the relation between the missionaries and the community is always tense. For instance, during the Holy Week celebration in 2014 the Catholic priest was 'invited' by the authorities to leave the celebration, because he wanted the ritual to be performed in a different way to O'dam local practice.

<sup>110</sup> Every action conducted by the *mayordomos* have specific positions in relation to the other ones. It is important to have this mind since in what follows I am not repeating these details.





**Image 19 The Holy Sepulchre in Juktir**

That morning the *mayordomos* continue to feed the dancers who are already performing in the chapel. This happens on the morning that the *mayordomos* present their replacements at the courthouse. That evening, after the dancers have been fed, they start cooking the big *titmaich* and the women stay awake to keep an eye on them. They also start toasting the corn for making the *tuisap* and to form the crowns later on which along with the *titmaich*, will be handed over on the last day. In big festivals like Holy week, it is common that several relatives, both cognates or in laws, help the *mayordomos*. Normally six or more women work during the festivals helping each pair of *mayordomos*, day and night, grinding and boiling corn for the tortillas and the *titmaich*.

On the night of the first day, the *mayordomos* formally take possession of their own respective kitchen by lighting a firework rocket inside. They then go and light a fire for cooking on the floor. These kitchens are buildings erected close to the chapel where meals for the festival are cooked. There are two in Juktir shared by two couples in each. In Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim there is a big kitchen, shared by the four couples.





**Image 20 Communal Kitchen at Juktir**

Early in the morning of the saints day (4 or 5am), the *mayordomos* meet at the kitchens to start coking the *atuulh*. It takes approximately three hours of mixing water with flour, sugar, and starch. It requires many hands constantly moving a ladle counter clockwise in a big pot to prevent it from burning. That morning each couple of *mayordomos* cook approximately 150L of *atuulh* for offerings to the saints, and to give the incoming *mayordomos* and also to distribute among the people.



**Image 21** *Mayordomos* preparing *atuulh* in the Communal kitchen

At about 9am the *mayordomos* meet the 'new ones' at church transfer the dry grass brooms, the incense, the incense burner as well as the candles.<sup>111</sup> They then prepare for the first procession alongside the church officiants, the courthouse officers holding little lit candles, the *kokprat* burning incense, the *pasioner(s)* holding 'the passion' and a little bell, along with the other visitors. At Juktir the incoming *mayordomos* kneel in front of the altar while the *pasioner* rings the little bell in his hand. The church officiants take the image of the Virgin of Nativity and put it on the top of the head of the major's *fiestero* wife. The officiants take Saint John –the Virgin's couple –<sup>112</sup> or the celebrated image and give it to the male major *mayordomos*. The *tupilh* goes to the church tower and ring the bells. All the participants leave the nave and go to the forecourt ensuring that they keep a distance from the opposite sex. Women stand on the left and men on the right (facing the altar). The *nini'dam* wait outside the building and stand at the door, in two parallel lines, while the musicians play.

<sup>111</sup> Exceptionally at the festival of Saint Francis in 2011, this took place at 2pm because most of the people, including one female *mayordomo*, received the money from *Oportunidades*, one of the governmental social assistance programs.

<sup>112</sup> There can be different arrangements, but this is what normally happens in processions.

Then the procession goes ahead. The parade moves to the forecourt and circles counter clockwise around the central Cross and then returns to the church. On the way the *kopraat* burn incense and the environment becomes festively noisy: firework rockets explode; the bells ring; the dancers shake their rattles as well as slap their sandals against the floor; the musicians; the *pixkalh* and sometimes the missionaries enunciating Hail Marys. The dancers are the first to arrive back at the church door. They wait there with their arms raised over their heads, shaking their rattles towards the floor. The procession goes back into the building through the two parallel lines formed by the dancers. Inside, men and women return to their original positions and the officiants place the sculptures back on the altarpiece. Then, everyone kneels and silently prays for a few minutes.<sup>113</sup> After this there is a new procession all the way to the chapel.<sup>114</sup>

In the chapel, the church officiants place the sculptures on the platform at the back of the building, and continue the same disposition as in the church. The *mayordomos* bring meals: *atuulh* (two cups each) and hot chocolate topped with animal crackers. The *nini'dam* perform while people enjoy the dances and the *atuulh*. Outside, many people walk around and enjoy the music of the *norteño* bands. Meanwhile the local authorities stand alert at the courthouse checking for any trouble during the celebration.

In the afternoon around 4pm a new procession goes back to the church. Once the patron saints are in place, the church officiants, the outgoing and the new *mayordomos* as well as other people who are willing to accompany them, stay for the Rosary in its local version: the prayers are arranged in sets of five. After that, only the 'new ones' remain in the church sitting on each side of the altar.

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<sup>113</sup> They call this brief act of praying 'the Mass'.

<sup>114</sup> The way from the church to the chapel is linear. For Willett (1996: 204), this is one of the main differences between the church festivals and the *xiotalh*, since in the latter the circular dances are preeminent. However, the procession from the church to the chapel is only half the way, and it has to be considered in relation to its return. For this reason, on the way to the chapel, the procession goes through the eastern side of the forecourt (divided by the central cross) and returns later through the western side describing a counter clockwise circulation (Reyes 2006a: 174).

After sunset the *mayordomos* feed the dancers and the new ones in the church forecourt. At around 10pm *la vispera* are said and the eve of the festival begins. The *mayordomos* go into the church burning incense. Formed in two parallel lines with the principals at either head, the major on the right and the *prioste* on the left, they go to the altar, then kneeling they greet the saints then they stand. Divided into two groups, they walk around the altar in opposite directions impregnating it with the smoke of incense. After five laps, the two groups move to the front door impregnating the side walls with incense. Once they reach the door, they return to the altar, walking through the centre of the nave. 'This is to scare the devil', people say. Then the *nini'dam* start their performance dancing throughout the night while the incoming *fiesteros* remain sitting down at each side of the altar burning incense. Sometimes, especially in crowded celebrations, people sing hymns when the dancers take a break.

Around 1am the *mayordomos* prepare chocolate in the forecourt to offer to the saints an hour later.<sup>115</sup> They use water from a holy spring located on the Scorpion's Hill, add sugar and serve it in cups topped with animal crackers. The *mayordomos* put the cups on the feet of the saints next to small *titmaich* made with *kipii*.<sup>116</sup> Afterwards, the *mayordomos* go to the forecourt and light one or two dozen firework rockets per couple, while the *tupilh* rings the bells in the tower indicating that *el alba*, the dawn, has arrived.

The next morning at sunrise, each couple of *mayordomos* sacrifices a calf.<sup>117</sup> However, holding the ritual abstinences impedes them from killing the animal themselves and they ask someone else to do it on their behalf. To this end the animal is placed on the floor with its legs tied and pointing northwards and its head eastwards highlighting the luminous aspect of the recipient divinities and the triumph of the sun over the darkness (Neurath 2002: 188; Reyes 2006a: 212).<sup>118</sup> A man carefully cuts the calf's jugular vein with a hot

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<sup>115</sup> This offering can take place before, about 1am, but never at midnight because it implies feeding the devil, which corresponds with the 'dark sun'.

<sup>116</sup> Dough is made by mixing *tuisap* with honey.

<sup>117</sup> Although this is the time indicated for this part of the ritual I have witnessed that sometimes *mayordomos* do it at a different moment given the many duties they must fulfil during the celebration

<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, when the recipients have a dark character the animal is placed in the opposite direction with its head pointing westwards. This is done, for instance, in Juktir when they sacrifice a dark goat to please the illness during the communal *xiotalh*.

knife and the *mayordomos* collect the first blood in a bowl and immediately offer it to the patron saints at the altar. The blood is still warm and vaporising since 'vapour is what the gods eat'.<sup>119</sup> Later they skin the rest of the animal and cut it into pieces for the stew with water and with no salt.

On the third day the proper *fiesta* takes place. At about 8am, all the people who stayed at the church during night, as well as other visitors, drink the cooled chocolate offered earlier by the *mayordomos*. This is a reward for staying the night, but it also implies commitment in keeping the abstinences for the coming days. At About 10am the participants take the sculptures in a procession to the chapel in the same way as the day before. Around an hour later, there is a new procession to the courthouse, but this time only with the celebrated saint,<sup>120</sup> while the other remains in the chapel. Here the *mayordomos* offer stew to the saints and to the courthouse officers, and distribute some among the other visitors.

About to 2 or 3pm the handing over of crowns and canes takes place. There are two processions that arrive simultaneously from the courthouse and the chapel. The two processions with the two saints meet halfway between the courthouse and the chapel. There the church officiants have previously constructed a small baldachin with oak branches and leaves forming a shelter. The two patron saints face each other, one looking northwards and the other in the opposite direction. They greet each other by the *mayordomos* who move discretely inclining themselves right and forward and left and forward. Then they circulate counter clockwise into a quadrant, facing eastwards and westwards respectively. They do this movement sixteen times, completing four whole circulations. After this the *mayordomos* put the images in the baldachin and they fetch the canes and crowns for handing over.

Once the incoming *mayordomos* receive the crowns, they go back to the chapel. The new *mayordomos* receive meals from the outgoing *mayordomos* and hand these out to all the participants and the people. These are: beef, tortillas, *kippii*, and *timaich*. An hour later the procession returns to the church

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<sup>119</sup> Later the blood is disposed. At Juktir this is done in a space between the church nave and tower where other ritual elements, the flowers for example, are disposed as well.

<sup>120</sup> For instance, at Saint Francis, Saint Francis and the Virgin of Nativity are moved to the chapel. But later, only Saint Francis goes to the courthouse.

and after no more than ten minutes of silent prayers, people leave again. In the forecourt, the dancers perform the last dance with the *son el Toro*, the bull. The choreography is about killing a bull impersonated by the *ja'ook*. After this, many of the participants take a break for the first time in three days while others, those involved in the festival's ludic side, continue drinking and enjoying the live music. Many of them wake up the next day in jail after being involved in fights. At Juktir not everything is over for the *mayordomos*. The next day they have to handover and receive the saint's wardrobe.

## CONCLUSION

During the Holy Week of 2014 in Juktir the Franciscan priest was “kindly encouraged” by the courthouse authorities to leave the village and consequently the celebration. This action was the result of a disagreement between the O'dam and the visiting priest, who wanted to place the crucified Christ at the centre of the nave in the church instead of upon the altar as local custom dictates. The priest did not stop there; he also wanted to raise the crucifix in a procession. In the eyes of the O'dam, whose ritual practice is strict and follows the precepts prior to the reformations introduced by the Second Vatican Council, these are serious infractions, and suggest the mocking of God, especially given the death of Christ and the state of mourning that holy week represents. As a result, the priest left offended and threatened and did not return to baptise the children.<sup>121</sup>

The missionaries frequently claim that ‘the O'dam do not know the correct way of performing’ and for this reason they have to be taught. Furthermore, the missionaries often express their dissatisfaction with O'dam independence from the ecclesiastic hierarchy, and their reluctance to any kind of change or ‘innovation’ in the rites or practice. These tensions do not only represent disagreements regarding details in the ritual performance, they clearly display different ways of being Catholic. From both perspectives, there is a correct form to the rituals. However, while the missionaries assume they know the legitimate way, the O'dam explicitly state that they know the correct form of

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<sup>121</sup> Something quite serious considering this is the only sacrament the O'dam ask of the priests.

interaction with the Christian deities in their local churches. The Tepehuan would say that: 'their gods are more delicate than the gods at the mestizo churches'. This is 'what the O'dam do with Christianity' (paraphrasing Gow 2009: 46), this is the way they relate to Christian deities. O'dam people actively construct (and contribute to) their own Christianity, it is not a misinterpretation, as missionaries maintain, nor is it an assimilation as the paradigm of 'acculturation' would conclude (Cf. Gow 1991: 10).

The fact that Christian gods are foreigners makes them quite delicate, not to mention more dangerous than indigenous gods. In fact, it is not a coincidence that the image of the devil in the O'dam and other indigenous imaginaries corresponds to a dark *Charro*. Thus, failure in the commitments acquired in primordial times with this set of gods can easily result in death. As a consequence, the relationship that O'dam people construct with them is carefully and gradually built, and it has to be carried out by following customary form, and by paying attention to the god's desires expressed through 'signs' coded in dreams or accidents. If this is well done, a good and prosperous life can be expected; on the contrary, failing the gods' expectations can bring illness and death. Thus, the O'dam relationship with foreigners' gods is very different from that held by the canonical Church perspective, and we assume by the missionaries, based on love and compassion received from the saints in the form of a *free gift*. From the Tepehuan perspective, on the other hand, dealing with the Spanish gods is a matter of life and death, and not to be meddled with lightly.



## Chapter 3

### The forest ancestors and the healers

A long time ago, God was here and called all the people, his offspring. He called to the Tepehuan, the Huichol, the Cora, and they arrived very late. On the other hand the *gringos* and the Spanish arrived first, and so received the 'good things'. The Cora, the Huichol, and the Tepehuan got there last and they [the Tepehuan people] did not get anything except the pipe, the tobacco, some feathers, a case, and the arrows for healing. These are the only things the Tepehuan received. Then they told God that those things were useless, to which God replied, "those things are quite useful, wear your *bura'* on your head and place the feathers there facing east and you will be a *gə'kam* [Big Person] because you will stand up for the people." This was what God told the Tepehuan and this is what they received. For this reason the Tepehuan are poor, but they are healers, they stand up for the people when they are ill, they pray to God and ask for relief. This is the reason God told the Tepehuan: you will be a Big Person too, like the President, as a mediator before God. That was what the Tepehuan were told, and for this reason these things have stayed with them: the pipe and the tobacco, the case and the feathers that they use to heal. And that is how it happened, this is why the Tepehuan are poor, but healers, some others are lawyers and some others not, but all the Tepehuan are poor.

Saturnino Solís Mendoza, Santa María de Ocotán, 6th of July 2014<sup>122</sup>



Image 22 The pipe, the tobacco, the arrows, the feathers, and the case

<sup>122</sup> Originally narrated in O'dam. Translated into Spanish and English with the help of Honorio Mendía Soto.



## INTRODUCTION

Being in a relationship with the gods requires an initiation process. Different people have greater or lesser degrees of initiation, implying more or less a proximity to the gods and the spirit. In this regard, healers and other shamans<sup>123</sup> are granted the ability to place themselves in a close and privileged position. Furthermore, for the O'dam there are different kinds of gods, and they have different capacities for action and interaction with humans. As described in former chapters, *xiotalh* patios and churches are the dwelling places of different gods with different domains of action. The gods of the former are mainly related to maize agriculture and the 'brightest' aspects of life. Conversely, the gods from church are associated with the Spanish or *mestizo* world and those aspects of life that developed as a result of European contact. In this chapter I describe a third scope of god-human relationship, which the O'dam call 'fasting in the forest for a month'. This takes the form of retreats which take place in the middle of the forest in a space especially arranged to that end. In this context, the type of gods or spirits people interact with is not as explicit as in the *xiotalh* or as in church. In the forest, people pray every day mentioning Christian gods. Nevertheless, in 'the forest' the O'dam affirm that while in church they pray to the 'mestizo gods', in the forest they address their 'own gods'. This is better understood by attending to what people do to make sense of what people say, paying particular attention to the production of ritual objects during the retreat. I come back to this discussion in the conclusion.

The retreat in the forest brings together 'ordinary people' and novice healers through a 'shamanic initiation'. This implies the development of skills and knowledge to approach the gods more closely than in the two other contexts that I described earlier. Thereby acquiring a certain degree of control over god's ability to elicit action on their behalf. In this sense, everyone is potentially a shaman. For 'ordinary people', on one hand, the initiation in the forest pursues endeavours to make people stronger against illness and especially against envy and witchcraft. They are like healers acting 'in self-

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123 Since the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' can be applied to a wide range of phenomena (Vitebsky 2001: 10-11), I use them here in a very general sense, alluding to those individuals with the skills of mediation between humans and spirits (Hultkrantz 2007 [1993]). In Part II, I will discuss the pertinent distinction to make in the O'dam case.

defence', they say. On the other hand, through this initiation, novice healers are capable of creating a closest close relationship not only with the gods, but also with the spirits which are the sources of illness, thus making themselves capable of dealing with diseases.

'Fasting in the forest for a month' is something that every O'dam should ideally conduct five times throughout life. These retreats are conducted in the middle of the forest inside the *onam* (Juktir variation) or *unam* (Chianarkam variation), which are provisional leaf fences constructed for such specific events. Each retreat involves five weeks of seclusion plus a lapse of time for gradual reincorporation into 'human social life'. During the whole process people uphold regular ritual abstinences for becoming *xidhuukam*, 'to been blessed' –they restrain themselves of from any physical contact with the opposite sex, especially sexual intercourse, drinking alcohol, and getting angry –, and during the *liminal* stage they stress the abstention of the consumption of salt, the limited ingestion of food and the limited consumption of water. In these cases meals are restricted to products made with white corn and other local crops. During these periods of seclusion people fashion arrows, known as *biñak*, which constitute the physical manifestation of their new status once they have finished the retreat. Willet et al. (2013: 21) translate the term *biñak* as 'having confidence', which I suggest can be interpreted as an O'dam idiom for the change of status connected to the process of becoming an accomplished person. The O'dam state that once having a *biñak* is achieved, people become stronger and more resistant to illness, since the arrow constitutes 'a pillar, a pedestal, their roots'. Consequently, people lacking *biñak* are likely to be vulnerable to disease and vulnerable to death. In the particular case of novices and accomplished healers or *mamkagim* (singular *makgim*) these arrows are called *mam' kaya* in Juktir and *mamkixu* in Chianarkam, meaning '*makgim*'s objects or tools' (Reyes 2010a: 280).<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> O'dam people translate *makgim*, and its variation *makgam*, in Spanish as *curandero*, healer (Cf. Willett et. al 2013: 123). The term *dam dum* is also rare and in both cases the etymology is uncertain. I define *makgim* as 'the ones who dream well', based on their mastery to see into the oneiric realm otherwise this is hidden from common people. This definition corresponds with *mamkagim* equivalents among the Huichol, the *mara'akate*, defined as those who know how to dream (Neurath 2003: 12; 2006: 89). Despite the similarity of names and features, it is more likely to find the etymology in relation to cognate words from other languages in the Tepiman family. The Pima from Chihuahua and Sonora in Northern Mexico use the word *makam* and

In general, for ‘ordinary people’ there is no hurry to go on a retreat, unless a healer indicates the opposite because of a state of illness. However, it is common that children accompany their parents on retreat from the age of five, fashioning their first arrow. On the other hand, those individuals destined to be healers go on the retreat as soon as they have been identified by an accomplished healer, regardless of their age. If they are children, which is common, they will go on the retreat with their parents like other children do in order to fashion their *biñak*.

Completing five retreats for ‘ordinary people’ results in five *bipiñak* (plural of *biñak*)<sup>125</sup> and in a strong soul, less vulnerable to envy or witchcraft. Shamans on the other hand, must fashion as many arrows as the diseases they are destined to heal (normally between three and five) aside from the other paraphernalia. Further It is said that once ‘ordinary people’ complete their set of five arrows, they are in the position to continue to go on retreats of this type in order to become healers.

#### THE INITIATION PROCESS: IDENTIFYING THE NEWCOMERS

In this section I will describe the forest initiation process for both ‘ordinary people’ and novice healers. However, given its greater complexity I will dedicate more attention to novice healers, given its greater complexity. This is particularly notorious in regards to what happens prior to the retreat. While for ‘ordinary people’ in general, it is a matter of thinking about whether to do it or not and then deciding when to conduct retreats. For novice healers the retreat is a matter of life and death, as this implies being cured of a disease for which the initiation process is also the healing process (Cf. Deleage 2009; Reyes 2009a; Cf. Townsley 1993).

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they translate it as ‘*brujo*’, wizards or witches; the Thono O’odham from Arizona use the word *maakai* for traditional doctors. In the three cases, the word seems to be related to the verb *makia*’ in O’dam or *maak* in Tohono O’odham that in both cases means ‘to give’. The productive particle –*dam* in *makg-(d)am* or *maak-(d)am* or –O’dam and Tohono O’odham respectively– signifies ‘someone who gives something’ (linguist Luis Barragán, personal communication). I would propose ‘the one who gives life or health’, as we can conclude after analysing their duties (Chapter 5).

<sup>125</sup> The goal of having five arrows is the regional way in Santa María de Ocotán, while in San Francisco de Ocotán people fashion only one *biñak* in life, which is filled (the piece of bamboo) with five tassels of cotton during the subsequent retreats.

Since illness is conceived as an imbalance in the relationship between humans and gods (or different types of ancestors), in this regard there is no significant difference between suffering from diabetes, breaking a leg in an accident, or being chosen by deities to be their interlocutor as *makgim*. Whatever the case, relations have to be amended, and thus the initiation in the forest is addressed to that end or towards the strengthening of the soul.

For the future *mamkagim*, everything starts with their identification since it is said that they are born with this ability. There are individuals who manifest their special quality early in their lives. It is said that new-borns with two cowlicks on their heads are supposed to 'possess two lives', which identifies them as *mamkagim*. Furthermore, when new-borns do not seek out their mother's breast, or do not cry when they are not fed, it is a sign of their ability to fast, in exactly the same way that healers do. However, generally they are identified by an accomplished *makgim* capable of interpreting certain signs. The most common situation is that an individual falls ill, sometimes recurrently, and while being healed another *makgim* finds that the patient is destined to be capable of curing the particular illness he is suffering from. As my *compadre* Cesareo told me:

I was really sick. I started bleeding through my nose, 'streams of blood'. I blocked it with a cloth, but I started bleeding through my ears. I thought I was going to die. The next day I went to see the healer who was also my *compadre*, and two days later, once he had dreamed he said, 'it is not blood *compadre*, it is *barmillón* [vermilion], you are a healer. When I die, you will banish my soul'.

Every *makgim* receives the gift to heal specific illnesses. Some of them are able to deal with more than one disease, but normally it is a limited set. This means there are several kinds of *mamkagim* specialized in different types of diseases. In our example, bleeding was a sign of becoming a specialist in performing the banishment ritual for the soul. The word *barmillón* (Spanish *bermellón*; English vermillion) that the healer used to describe the blood is a special red colouring used to colour ceremonial arrows. Since *mamkagim* must fashion many of these in a lifetime, they are very familiar with this substance.



**Image 23 Ceremonial arrow lines painted with vermillion**

There are cases in which inheritance plays a key role in finding new candidates.<sup>126</sup> One of my *comadres* was identified as *makgim* after her grandfather died. During the soul's banishment ceremony, the *makgim* leading the ritual announced that she had inherited the gift from her grandfather who for some unknown reason was unable to develop it in life, and which remained an unpaid debt to deities. She thus also assumed the debt and was at risk of becoming ill or even dying if she did not start the initiation process.

Once the new *mamakgim* are identified, they must start the initiation process in order to be cured of the particular disease they are suffering from. If the newcomers are too young to conduct the ceremony and hold the corresponding abstinences by themselves, their parents must do it on their behalf.

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<sup>126</sup> It is likely that inheritance has a bigger role in finding the new comers. There is no doubt that families exist with healers in different generations. However, this remains an unexplored field of research.

Besides those individuals who were born as *mamkagim*, it is stated that people can wish to become one of them. As mentioned in the introduction, 'ordinary people' can take further steps in their initiation in the forest once they have finished the mandatory five retreats. Furthermore, it is said that people can also wish to become a *makgim* by 'asking a favour of the deities' through holding ceremonial abstinences and eventually acquiring the desired abilities. Currently, I do not have much information about this particular process and nobody readily admits to being that kind of *makgim*. In general, it seems that this is a non-legitimate way to acquire that power and people assume they are the *jix bhuam matim* or witchcraft practitioners (male and female) and capable of inducing damage to other people.<sup>127</sup>

Through my study I have registered the main kinds of *mamkagim* that can be described in relation to the particular disease or set of ailments they are able to heal. I present these, arranged in order of the degree of danger associated with each.

**Silñadam** (literally straightener). –This is a bone-setter. He or she need not be 'blessed' to do the work. It is common that people, who are destined to be a *silñadam* fall down, stumble or twist their ankle. In some cases it happens repeatedly until the individual goes on a retreat.

**Sobardam** (probably *o'dam* adaptation from Spanish '*sobar*', 'to massage') also **Siibaardam**. –The midwife. This is a woman who treats other women during and after pregnancy, including childbirth. It is recommended that pregnant women see this specialist after their fifth month of pregnancy to start receiving prenatal massages in the abdominal area. If babies are not correctly positioned in the womb, this specialist is able to reposition them. Both the healer and the pregnant woman must be 'blessed' during treatment, particularly because it is

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<sup>127</sup> Despite the Tepehuan people defining the *jix buam matim*, '*los brujos*,' as those capable of inducing damage in other people, it would be a mistake to radically oppose them to those who heal. Every single *makgim* is a potential sorcerer and has the power to heal and to kill. This phenomenon can be described by the term used by Amazonian anthropologists, 'dark shamanism', which manages to capture 'the ambiguity inherent in shamanic practice' (Whitehead and Wright 2004: 4).

sometimes required that the midwife dreams in order to identify possible ailments, their origins, and to consider if it is possible to position the baby's head downwards. The only way to know if they are able to perform this practice is through testing the practice itself. A *sobardam* from Santiago Teneraca told me that the first time she tried she did it with a cow and it worked. Then she had the courage to do it with a human.

***Dagiasda'm.*** –The ones who know how to 'push the navel down' when it is beating. The name for this is *jix chijoiñ* – literally 'the moving navel' – and without treatment they stop eating and eventually die. This illness can appear suddenly. People who are destined to be this kind of healer constantly suffer from *jix chijoiñ* when they are children and the remedy is to start the process of becoming a *dagiasda'm*.

***Baisi'ndam.*** –The speciality here is bringing people back home when they are away. It is common that they to use a piece of non-washed clothing belonging to particular individuals. After four or five days of fasting some are able to predict when a person will return.

***Koxpi'ndam or Koxi' matim*** (literally sleepiness knower). –This specialist is able to cure *koxi*, the term related to *koxia'*, 'to sleep'. This name probably alludes to one of the main symptoms, which is sleepiness. Patients are often irritable and melancholic as well. People who suffer from this illness have dreams about fruit (sometimes rotten), eggs, flowers, bees, birds and mice. But those who are destined to be *koxpi'ndam* dream that they are able to eat the fruit or the eggs, and they can also hold birds and mice in their hands. And they suffer chronic headaches as well. Children are especially susceptible to this disease and it is expected that they develop it in different stages of their life and they must be treated. Parents take their children to the healer at key turning points during their lives. Boys have to be healed twice in their lives: when their first tooth falls out and when they experience changes in their voices at around twelve or fourteen years of age; many people state that the second time should be at the age of four or five years, but in the end, it is the healer who decides. Girls, on the other hand, must be healed five times in their

lives: when they turn one year old; when they turn two; when all the teeth have fallen out; when they start developing breasts (around the age of ten); and when they first menstruate. In any case, at the first healing children must be accompanied by both parents or at least contribute in paying the healer, otherwise the treatment may fail. Another way of acquiring this illness is the result of having several sexual partners. When this happens, ill individuals will transmit the illness to those living with them: partner and offspring. It is stated that when a man has sexual intercourse with a woman who has children – and is thus potentially affected by *koxi* – the man should give her some money as a preventive measure thus protecting against the illness. The money can be used as a payment for a healer. If children are not treated at these stages, it is certain they will get sick. Once someone develops the illness and a healing procedure is not performed that person could easily die in an ‘accident’, or by scorpion sting or snake bite.<sup>128</sup>

***Jot’sadam***. –Those who are able to perform the *jootos* or the soul banishment ceremony. At six months and again a year after an individual dies, a ceremony must be conducted in order to rescue the dead person’s soul from the Place of Death. The soul is then sent back to heaven from where it originated prior to birth. After this the soul can return to life as a new born baby.

***Sudi’ matim*** (literally water knower). –These healers cure ‘*susto del agua*’ (Spanish, ‘water fear’). This illness occurs when a person is in the proximity of creeks or springs and they are frightened by creatures like snakes and toads. People with this ailment often shiver and suffer from stomach ache, and often the hands, feet or face swell as well. During meals they often vomit as if they were expelling water.

Three agents are able to enter the body and cause this illness and pain:

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<sup>128</sup> Scorpions are Gods’ watchers (Ambriz and Gurrola 2013a: 75)



-*Nibi gio gu nabaat*, The *mestizo* one: Tepehuan people describe this disease agent as 'a husband or a wife' who wants to take the sick person away with him/her. Sick men dream about a mestizo woman while sick women dream about a mestizo man. The *makgim* must kill the mestizo in order to heal the sick person. One of my informants mentioned that once she suffered from this disease, she dreamt that the mestizo told her: 'you want to kill me, right?'

-*Nibi gio gu mulh*, the turtle

-*Nibi gio gu ko'*, the snake

*Nibi* is translated into Spanish as *sirena* (siren/mermaids). When the *nibi* is a turtle it is difficult to remove because it becomes hard, whereas when it is a snake it is easier. The people destined to heal this kind of illness frequently suffer from it themselves until they start to become a *makgim*.

**Gɛ' makgim** (literally 'the greatest healer'). –Such healers are able to heal different diseases, but a speciality is the healing of *daño* (from Spanish *daño*, 'damage'). *Daño* is sent by someone with the express purpose of causing sickness in somebody else. One of my informants told me 'people say there are individuals who make dolls out of cloth. If the doll's left foot is stepped on and it makes a noise like a hummingbird this means the *daño* is alive'. Others cause such damage by offering someone else's life to the dark spirits who live in precipices in exchange for favours. 'But we really do not know how this is done' one informant remarked. Some Tepehuan people assure that only Huichol healers are able to deal with this disease. When this healing is performed it is common to suck the patient's body, extracting objects like bones (from the graveyard), animal hair (cows), animal excrement (chickens, for example), pieces of cloth that the sick person had lost, snakes, candles, pieces of broken glass, metal nails, etc. Mestizo people can easily die from this because they are not protected by a *biñak* like O'dam people are.

**Jix buam matim or jix buam tu maat**. -The sorcerer/witch. Those who are able to cause damage to other people, especially *daño*, through arrangements with 'dark forces'.

There is a set of five illnesses known as *g'g'er ko'xi* (literally greatest illness). It is stated that these are sexually acquired as a consequence of multiple sexual partners. These are described as follows:

**Garabat.** –A prominent symptom in men is bleeding through the penis. If this is not remedied by a *makgim* the individual can bleed to death.

**Oiridam kokdai'.** -People feel a repulsion to food. As a consequence, sick people stop eating, they become thin and eventually they die.

**Yooxi' miidha'** (Literally burning flower). - People with this illness appear very beautiful and attractive to others, 'like a flower you want to pick'. Once the illness is acquired weakness and pain are felt throughout the body. Sexual intercourse can calm the pain and suppress the illness. Sometimes the symptoms disappear for a while (one or two months) but return if the sick person is not cured. As a word of caution, one of my informants recommended one should be wary 'when one finds a woman very attractive'.

**Jikuañi'.** -People do not feel hunger and they suffer from diarrhoea.

**Jix bipgiom** (Literally pink). -People suffer fever and pain in their bones. When the sick person stands up they often see 'stars' or white spots.

**Jix choiñ kokdai'** (Literally Hot illness). -The ill person suffers from stomach aches and stops eating. Sometimes the ill person excretes blood while urinating. While curing the healer extracts worms from the body which can be red, white or green.

#### FASTING IN THE FOREST FOR A MONTH: AN ETHNOGRAPHY

Recording the forest initiation process through fieldwork has many complications since there is some degree of secrecy involved. First, individuals who start the process have to do so as soon as possible if not immediately, otherwise they are in danger of becoming ill again. Second, Discretion is required to avoid becoming the object of 'envy' to other individuals and, especially from other *mamkagim* who might be jealous and so spoil the process or make an attempt on the novices' lives since they are in a very delicate

situation. Third, given the fact that the whole process can take between six and ten years, novices prefer to keep their initiation secret until they have become accomplished *mamkagim* themselves: Fourth, once it is public that someone is a *makgim*, he or she cannot refuse if someone asks for help. Regardless of this, it is impossible to keep this the process absolutely secret, since close relatives and other *mamkagim* are involved in the process. Given these complications, it was particularly difficult to find a novice in the early stages of initiation who was willing to share the experience with me while I was conducting research. I will briefly describe the initiation process I recorded in January of 2012. The novice, who I am naming Pedro, started his initiation process three years earlier when the type of retreat I describe was conducted for the first time.

Pedro was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April in 1990 in Cerro de las Papas, Yatuicha'm, a small settlement belonging to the community of Santa María de Ocotán. He grew up there and lived with his maternal uncle's family since his mother had to leave to find a job. Before Pedro's birth, his father abandoned his pregnant mother and contact was only made years later and they did not maintain any sort of relationship. In 2012 when I conducted much of my fieldwork Pedro was finishing his final year of Law School in Durango City. Pedro's mother and her current husband are close friends of mine and this is how I met Pedro. Pedro found out he had to become a *makgim* when he was eight years old. His mother took him to see the healer –he does not recall the reason - and they were informed that in order to be completely cured and to not die, Pedro would have to go to the forest and hold a retreat at some point, which he did in 2009. Before this, he mentioned that sometimes he would suddenly have a nosebleed without any apparent cause. Then when he consulted a different *makgim*, he was told it was important to go on the retreat as soon as possible and start the initiation process in order to stop the bleeding. This he did.

At some point in 2011 Pedro received a message from this healer, informing him that it was important to continue with the second stage of the process that once again to do this as soon as possible, otherwise he was in danger of getting ill. Besides, it was important to do it soon because they were just in time to 'ask favours of the deities' for one of five gifts they were able to grant Pedro. The healer stated that besides being a *makgim* Pedro would have

good luck in one of five professions: teacher, lawyer, medical doctor and two others he says he does not remember because he was not interested. He had to ask for this favour soon or the opportunity would be lost. Since Pedro was studying in the city he was not able to do it immediately and had to wait until the next holiday period. Meanwhile he asked and paid the healer to intervene with the deities and ask them for an extension. Also, people in general prefer to retire into the forest in winter during the dry season. Pedro decided to do it in January 2012. As I mentioned before, not only novices must isolate themselves in the forest, any O'dam individual should do it at least five times in a life. Therefore Pedro's mother and his eight year old sister decided to do it at the same time making the most of the presence of the *makgim* who they paid to accompany them.

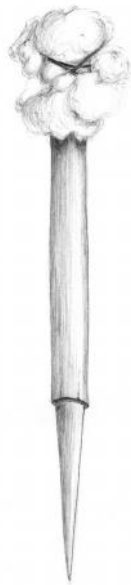
The next step was to find an accomplished trustworthy *makgim* they could ask to perform the service. When I first interviewed Pedro in a cafe in Durango City in September 2011, he had not decided yet which healer he wanted to hire to accompany him on the retreat. He mentioned the possibility of hiring the former healer who helped him. However, it was going to be a little difficult since by that time the healer had a position as a courthouse officer in Juktir, and perhaps lacked free time to work as a healer. The decision has to be made carefully since if other *mamkagim* know about it, they could start 'blocking' the newcomer and try to make him fail.

Eventually, Pedro decided to ask a woman who helped his grandmother in the past. Besides, Pedro considered that since the *makgim* was a woman, it was unlikely she would envy him as a man and he could trust that she was not going to compromise his future as a healer. Pedro's mother had told this *makgim* in advance about Pedro's initiation. However, it was necessary to confirm and formalize her help through Pedro making a request in person. On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> of December we went to look for the *makgim* in the village of Kob'aram (a half hour drive from Juktir).

There is a very formal way to address healers by praying while asking for help. Pedro asked the *makgim* for her help in his initiation and for her permission to allow me to witness the process. Pedro obtained both, but even though he was willing to start immediately the next day, they arranged the retreat date for the following week, on the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> of December. The

*makgim* said she would like to start working on her own and, ask the deities for their favour. With regard to me, she said if I really wanted to understand I should go through the same process as Pedro's mother and sister, in order to make myself stronger: 'he is always around the church and the *xiotalh* patio, so it is good for him to protect himself,' she said. I was surprised about this fact since I had never met her before.

The next morning, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December, after taking the mandatory shower we began keeping abstinences and we fashioned arrows. Every single person who is going to be treated by a *makgim* must fashion an *u'uu*,<sup>129</sup> an arrow, and give it to the healer. That person's 'soul' is put into the arrow by touching different parts of the body with a cotton tassel which is attached at the top of the arrow. The *u'uu* of this type are generally known as *sakom* (Reyes 2010a: 278). This time the *makgim* said it was all right if Pedro and his relatives used the same arrow, but that I should have my own in case something went wrong. For instance, in case we got upset with one another or one of us was unable to withstand the fasting (she told me at the end of the retreat that she did not expect me to finish), which would otherwise ruin the other person's healing process.



**Image 24 *Sakom*, votive arrow**

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<sup>129</sup> Generic term for arrow.

That morning Pedro and his relatives went to see the healer at her place in Juktir to give her their arrow. I went later accompanied by Pedro. Before this, I received advice from Pedro's mother about being careful that nobody else realized I was on my way to see the *makgim* and especially that I had the *sakom*. Once there, I formalized the petition giving her my arrow and asking her to help me with a problem I had in my right foot (*Plantar fasciitis*). I asked her for my family's wellbeing and for success in my studies. Then I paid her 1 000 Mexican pesos in advance as part of the charges for her service (the total cost for healing is 2 500 Mexican pesos, approximately £150/person). She received my arrow and stuck it in an agave leaf beside her own ceremonial arrows and those belonging to other patients. I then had to rub my body with the money notes, paying special attention to my right foot, and I had to put the money on the agave leaf beside my arrow. Then she told me she would ask [the deities] why I had a painful foot.



**Image 25 Makgim set of arrows**

The next morning she informed Pedro of the exact nature of my problem.<sup>130</sup> She said that she dreamt that the source of my pain came from the fact that some people in the village (and probably in other Tepehuan villages) were suspicious of my presence there. “Some of them do not understand your job here and they think you are here to steal something”, she told Pedro.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of December we bathed for the last time in for four weeks. That afternoon we constructed a shelter close to Pedro’s mother’s house with oak branches and leaves.<sup>131</sup> Under normal conditions people look for a really isolated place in the forest because it is important not to have contact with anybody else. But given the current security situation and the fact that we could be at risk of assault or kidnap, the healer accepted our request to make an exception. We built three shelters in a line from south to north, one for men (south); one for the arrows we were going to fashion (centre); and one for women (north) which is also a kitchen. Our shelter was approximately 3m in diameter and stood 2m high. The women’s shelter was slightly larger since they needed enough space for cooking. Also the women’s shelter had to be large enough to accommodate another woman and her ten year old daughter whom the *makgim* decided to treat at the same time. Once we built the shelters we collected enough firewood for the following month. That night we had our ‘last supper’; our last salted meal, and then we went into the shelter, lit the fire and slept.

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<sup>130</sup> Pedro repeated this a week later as I went to Durango City for Christmas Eve.

<sup>131</sup> It is possible to use foliage from other trees but oak lasts longest.



**Image 26 Women's Shelter**

After that night we were only allowed to eat white maize prepared in different ways: *tortillas*, *atuulh*, *junma'n*, and *boik*.<sup>132</sup> It has to be white in order to allow for clear dreams, because it is said that other colours of maize, especially the blue varieties, block the visions in dreams. Besides maize we were allowed to have toasted pumpkin seeds, boiled white potatoes, white onions and green tomatoes, all of which must be locally grown, *chilacayote* (*Cucurbita ficifolia*) and water. Salt was strictly forbidden. At meal times we were allowed to have as much as we could eat of these foods. However, it did not matter how hungry we were, it was not easy to eat very much. After drinking one of two cups of water and one or two cups of *atuulh*, there was only space for three or four tortillas and some onions and pumpkin seeds which are hard to peel. Also, after the second week the body demands less food and one grows tired of having the same thing every day.

The first week we only had meals once a day after 6pm (it was normally around 7pm); the second week, the fourth and during the weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) we had two meals: after 1pm and after 6pm; the third and the fifth

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<sup>132</sup> *Atuulh* or *atole*, is a hot beverage made mixing maize dough with water; *junma'n* is a dish prepared with maize dough and in this particular case mixed with pumpkin seeds; and *boik* are dehydrated corn grains.



week we repeated the procedure of the first week, eating only once a day. Since fasting is central to the process and it is proof of real self-sacrifice, it is desirable to fast completely (all food and all water) for at least one day or as much as one can stand in the first week: five days being the ideal. This time Pedro managed for two days. Since it was not mandatory for me, I chose not to do it.

It is expected that a hired *makgim* accompanies people in retreat during the first and fifth week. She had agreed that this was the way it would be. However, on the first day one of her sons informed us that she was healing one of her relatives who unexpectedly got ill, and she would not be with us during the first week.

After waking up on the first morning we were not allowed to say hello or good morning to each other anymore. In this situation, if someone arrived and said *xïban*, hello, then instead of using the standard reply *bhai'p xïban*, one needed to say *ak bahjakup*, which is a clear indication one is fasting on retreat. Then the visitors know they must leave.

The first morning we fashioned a new arrow. I made one and Pedro made two. This was my first *biñak*, with the possibility of having up to five which must be held in different years.<sup>133</sup> In Pedro's case, the new arrows are related to the afflictions he will be able to cure. For instance, the colours of one of these arrows' 'decorative yarn' are associated with the colours of some worms that cause a particular disease (*jix choiñ kokdai'*), which he will be capable of curing by sucking these from the patient's body. In the case of Pedro's mother, she fashioned her fourth arrow while the other woman and the two children made their first.

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<sup>133</sup> As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, this is a tradition in Santa María de Ocotán. Conversely, in San Francisco de Ocotán people only fashion one arrow in a lifetime, with the possibility of filling it with five cotton tassels during five different retreats.



**Image 27 My *biñak***

Once made, the arrows are stuck into an agave leaf and set in a special shelter located between the shelters of the men and women. Arranged in a line, the men's arrows must be placed on the south side while women's arrows on the north. When a *makgim* is there he must place his own arrow in the centre. Then one must pray and 'feed them' by blowing water and tobacco smoke from a pipe over the arrows:<sup>134</sup> people say 'it is like watering them, to make them grow' (like plants). Normally the *makgim* is the first to place the arrows and to pray. Men and women must do this separately. In the case of the children they must be beside their parents who pray on their behalf while they are learning. Prayers must be conducted in front of the arrows, and facing east. Once in front of the

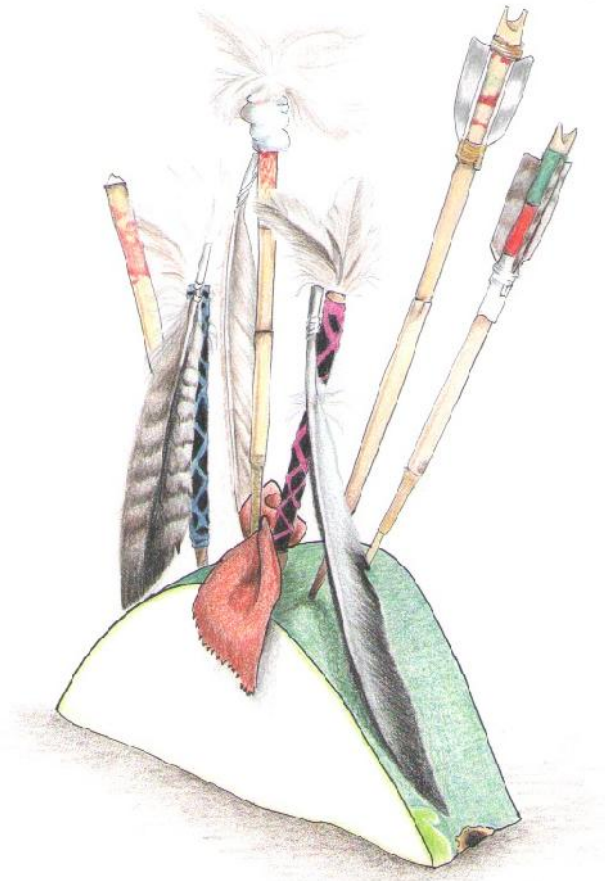
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<sup>134</sup> When I first talked to the healer, she told me to bring my own pipe with me the next time, since it was going to be needed during the retreat. I asked her if it should be new and she said that it did not matter. In this regard it is important to mention that in keeping with San Francisco de Ocotán tradition, many healers ask their patients to make their own pipe during their first retreat.

arrows one takes the pipe filled with tobacco in the left hand and lights it. Then one must cross oneself. Healers, or novices like Pedro, must take the *noonob* (which he fashioned during his former retreat)<sup>135</sup> using the right hand. Next one takes some water from a bottle and rinses the mouth, spitting the water onto the ground. Taking some water into the mouth again one must blow it vigorously onto the arrows. Then one exhales tobacco smoke, three or five puffs, onto the arrows as well. Thereafter, one starts praying in a low voice by naming the deities (Christian saints and O'dam deities) one knows, telling them how one feels that day and asking them for the favour one is fasting for. Old men and healers sometimes do this for more than half an hour. Pedro did it for approximately 15 minutes while I did it for 5 or 6 minutes. It has to be repeated three times a day: between 8 and 9am; at 1pm; and again at 5pm. After praying and feeding the arrows in the evening, the fast is lifted and one is allowed to have water and food. This process is repeated throughout the first, third and fifth weeks, while during the second and fourth weeks, and on weekends, the arrows get to rest inside their case and novices do not pray.

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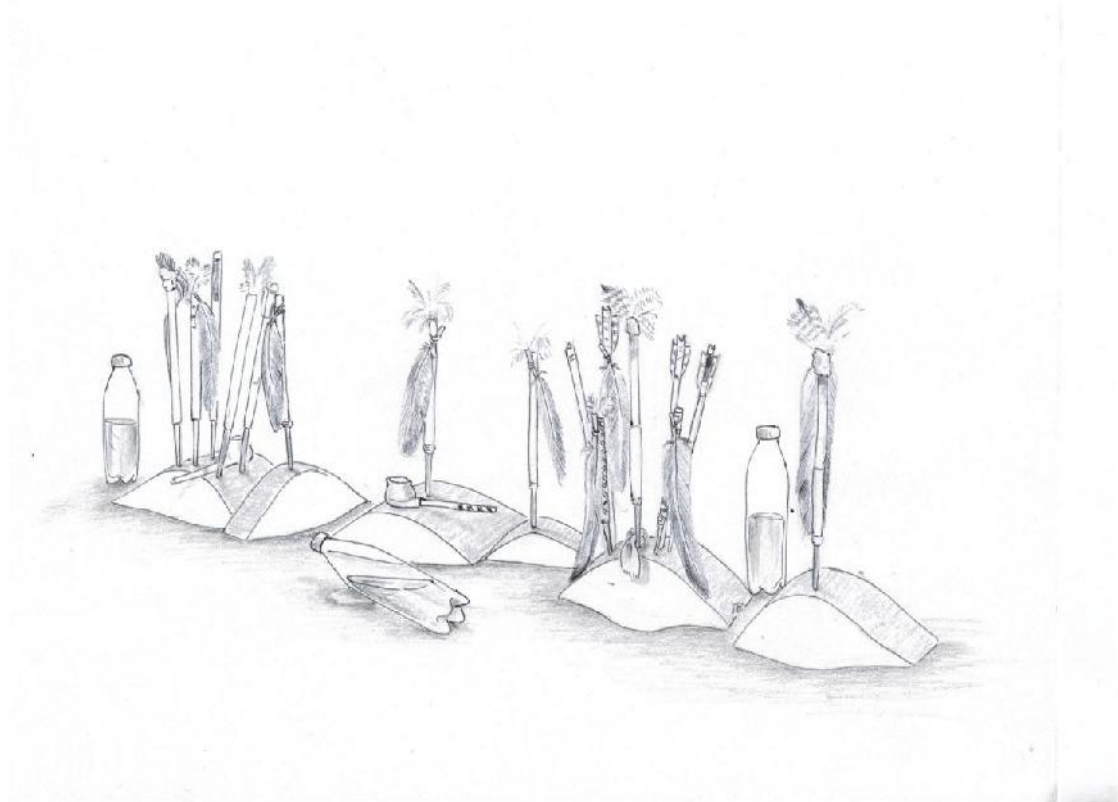
<sup>135</sup> Literally meaning 'hands', these are a couple of feathered sticks similar to arrows but with a different quality.



**Image 28 Pedro's *mam' kaya* and *noonob***

Making the most of the time during the retreat, Pedro and his mother were Counting Fridays (Chapter 2). This was a ceremonial debt Pedro's mother incurred one year before when she and her husband were *mayordomos* for the Virgin of Guadalupe. After the celebration they did not complete the five weeks of abstinences required. Since she had to keep similar abstinences during the retreat, it was a good time to fulfil her debts with the deities. Since Pedro's mother's husband was not conducting the retreat, Pedro accompanied her because it has to be done by couples. To that end, they borrowed a piece of cloth belonging to the major Christ (there are two) and one from the Virgin of Guadalupe from the church in Juktir. This cloth remained in a woven *soyate* (type of palm) basket hanging from a branch in the arrow shelter for the week. Every Friday, after praying to the arrows, Pedro and his mother took out the pieces of cloth and put them on oaks leaves on the ground. Then, they lit five small candles and prayed in silence in front of these until the candles had

completely consumed themselves. After this, they returned the pieces of cloth to the bag.



**Image 29 All the participants' arrows during the retreat (mine and Pedro's arrows on the right; women's arrows on the left; Pedro's mother's arrows on the far left)**

Throughout the five weeks one must remain in or near the shelter. One of the reasons for conducting the retreat during the winter is because the days are shorter and one can go to sleep earlier since by 7pm it is already dark.<sup>136</sup> But at the same time the nights are very cold (8 to 10 degrees below zero in the early morning) and one wakes up around 7am just to relight the fire and to be close to it. Light rains are expected in January and sometimes a little snow as well. Folk take advantage of time in the retreat to weave or embroider bags or carpets. While some *mamkagim* are quite strict about the kinds of activities allowed, some of them are more relaxed. Some *mamkagim* strictly instruct people to do nothing but stay awake during the day and to limit activities to the preparation of meals and bringing water, in the case of women, while men only collect firewood from the surrounding grounds. Contact between men and women is

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<sup>136</sup> Also, the rainy season belongs to the underworld ancestors.

strictly forbidden and at meal times women leave food and water on the ground at the entrance of the men's shelter. Nevertheless, some *mamkagim* allow people to drink Pepsi (or Coca) or even allow them to play cards.<sup>137</sup> In our case the *makgim* allowed us books for reading, notebooks for writing and drawing and a chess set. We were allowed to talk to women, but only when absolutely necessary. At the same time, Pedro's mother's husband who was at home, also observed some of the abstinences, and he was in charge of bringing supplies when needed, like food when we ran out. Nevertheless, since he was 'salty', it was important to avoid any physical contact with him, and the items he brought were strictly left for us on the ground.

We passed the time trying to keep warm, close to the fire or in the sun, praying, reading, playing chess, and smoking tobacco from a clay pipe. In this regard it is important to mention that we were allowed to smoke as much tobacco as we wanted to, and we had to learn to ration it. The first week Pedro and I smoked all our supply for the whole month because Pedro's mother thought we were only going to smoke during prayers. Sometimes we chopped wood with an axe and made repairs to the shelter when needed. There are *mamkagim* who strictly prohibit sleeping during the day because as people say it is when 'the Devil wins'. We received no indication of this. However, considering how short the days were and the fact that it was not desirable to be awake during the freezing nights, we avoided sleeping during the day. From time to time we talked about what we were going to do after we finished and imagined what we would eat once we finished fasting. Every day we watched the bus going to and coming from the city of Durango and we saw other trucks on the road from our place. Almost every day Pedro's little sister cried because her mother did not allow her to have some forbidden food and she wanted to go home to have eggs or other things with her father. The other child liked to sing songs she learned in school. She had a song book with her and every day she tried to learn a new song. Some evenings Pedro's mother's husband practiced with his *norteño* band and played music.<sup>138</sup> On New Year's night we heard music from the village, especially after 1am when people decided it was unlikely

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<sup>137</sup> Although this can be dangerous as it can provoke anger.

<sup>138</sup> A *norteño* band is normally integrated by a guitar, a sixth bass, an accordion, and a *tololoche* (similar to a double bass).

that it was the End of the World.<sup>139</sup> After the 15<sup>th</sup> of January we were occasionally able to hear the song from the bow of the *xiotalh* ceremony held on the communal patio. Over weekends some other children visited Pedro's little brother and they played about the house close to the shelter. Pedro told me it was unlikely to hear such noises when holding the retreat in more isolated locations.

By the end of the third week people say one has passed the most difficult part of the retreat and the more vulnerable period in which others can sabotage the process. At the end of the fourth week we had our first shower. And at the beginning of the fifth week the healer arrived. Pedro and I constructed a shelter for her and for her grandchildren who accompanied her.

That week more people incorporated themselves into the retreat. Pedro's fourteen year-old sister, his ten year-old brother and his mother's husband joined. They were making the most of the presence of the *makgim* and asked her for help with some particular problems that did not demand fasting for more than a week. Besides, the *makgim* recommended that at the end of the process, all of us who had stayed there for the whole month be accompanied by someone else. This was the case for Pedro's sister who was there just to be with him. The healer made an exception for me. All of the others had to keep abstinences for that week, having meals once a day only.

The first day of that week we moved all the arrows outside of their shelter and placed them alongside the healer's arrows to the East where we built an altar similar to those used in *xiotalh* patios (Chapter 1). That week, after anyone prayed, the *makgim* did the same, gathering all the participants in front of her in a line from east to west.<sup>140</sup> The arrows stood to the east, while in the west stood the healer. Over half an hour she delivered prayers while smoking tobacco from a pipe. At the end she sprayed water with her mouth on people's heads and the arrows. This was performed three times a day.

Starting on Monday that week, after our morning prayers everyone had to see the *makgim* privately at her shelter. I asked if it was possible to have Pedro

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<sup>139</sup> Besides all the rumours in the media about the end of the world in 2012, there were local signs of the gods' discomfort, especially many cases of children suffering from illness -mainly passing out unexpectedly- and who claimed to have spoken to the gods.

<sup>140</sup> People sit before the altar in the same way I described in Chapter 1 for children's initiation in the *xiotalh* patios and in maize eating.

with me as an interpreter but the healer denied this. We did our best speaking both O'dam and Spanish. Talking to her implied asking for her intermediation with the deities; thus one starts praying by mentioning some of the deities and asking for their favour; then she asked about our dreams and provided an interpretation. In my case I had a significant dream on Wednesday morning which the *makgim* interpreted as a sign of good luck in my job and as an indication of the relief of some of the pain I was suffering in one of my feet. This is a summary of that dream:

- I was in Mexico City under a bridge outside the Azteca Stadium. I did not mention this detail to the healer because I found it the location a little difficult to describe.

-I was there with my *compadres* Juan and María (María is Pedro's mother) and we were walking on the street looking for a hospital or a pharmacy.

-I asked them to wait for me while I was looking for the hospital. At this point I realized we were in Mexico City. It was under a bridge on a freeway similar to that which is outside *Boulevard Puerto Aereo* subway station, close to the airport, but I was definitely outside the stadium (which is located in a different place in the city).

- I walked out from under the bridge on *Calzada de Tlalpan* Street, on the west side and moved northwards. Then I found a market on the street. There were all sorts of things: fruits and vegetables, tools, electronics, kitchen appliances and food.

-I walked and passed in front of a place where they were selling *tacos de carnitas* (fried pork *tacos*). The smell was so good and intense. They were offering me the food. I craved it but I remembered I was 'blessed' and I refused it.

-After walking for a while I found a stand where I bought a pair of shower sandals. They were plastic and transparent just like a pair I had at home.

-I wore them but they were too small for my feet and they hurt when I walked. As I kept walking they got more flexible and comfortable.<sup>141</sup>

The *makgim* explained to me that it was clear my foot was still hurting, but It was getting better because we are 'asking' [deities favour], we are praying and 'we are defeating'. She mentioned the market is a sign of good luck as well.

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<sup>141</sup> Telling her the dream was difficult because there were many unfamiliar situations for someone who had never spent time in Mexico City. Then I had to do my best to try to explain it.



For Pedro his dream on Tuesday morning was truly an epiphany. He told me it was a little scary. He went to see the *makgim* and after talking to her he told me his dream:

-He was sleeping in the shelter and he woke up and went to relieve himself. He left the shelter, walking east.

-Coming back to the shelter, he found two trucks in his way and many people around. All of them were Pedro's relatives.

-They conducted Pedro through a corridor where he heard people having a party and some of them were drunk. One of them took his arm and tried to fight him but then another drunken man intervened and told the first one that he was 'blessed'.

-Pedro kept walking until he found an auditorium with benches set along the walls, 'like in churches'.<sup>142</sup> He wanted to leave, but then a man sat down on his left and a woman on his right. She took his arm and laid her head on his shoulder. He did not want to stay there or pay attention to them, but 'I was blessed' [*sic*] he mentioned.

-He tried to leave, but at that moment the one who was having the party arrived. He was some kind of a 'leader', a politician, and asked Pedro not to leave.

-Somehow he managed to leave and went back to the shelter but now it was a building like a '*vecindad*'<sup>143</sup> with many floors. Since he knew women were in one room and men in another he went to the men's room. There were two beds and I was lying in one of them. The room had an open window and it was possible to see another building through it with wide windows.

-He heard the movement and grinding of the beds from the other building. They sounded like hospital beds. There were sick people in those beds. Some of them had their whole bodies bandaged.

-One of them was bandaged entirely and had a hanging serum bag beside him. That person looked at him and started writing something for him on a piece of paper.

-Then he got scared and closed the window. But then he received the paper, it was like a bone, he took it in his hands and then he woke up startled.

After that he had problems getting back to sleep again.

The *makgim* stated that the dream was a clear indication that he was ready to heal people. 'They are real sick people who are calling you to cure them', she told Pedro. She mentioned he would face things like this in his dreams. Pedro

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<sup>142</sup> This is the way benches are set in churches in Tepehuan communities

<sup>143</sup> *Vecindad* is a type of neighbourhood arranged in a building with a big shared central courtyard where common sinks are set. *Vecindades* were common in Mexico City's centre since the end of the 19th Century and during the first half of the 20th Century.

looked worried when he told me this. But the *makgim* told him he would be well, since she had dreamt about receiving a horse as a gift. This horse is ‘the good luck to be a healer’ and he must take care of it. She told him he must find the saddle the next time he fasts in a retreat. The fact that Pedro was ready to heal was something completely unexpected since he was still at an early stage of learning and he mentioned: ‘I do not know yet how to perform the healings’. The *makgim* told him this was not necessary, but that from then on, if anyone came to him for help, even for a simple pain or problem, he must be willing to help, at least by cheering them up.

On the fifth day of the fifth week after evening prayers all of us placed our arrows in their cases where they were to remain until the next time we were in a retreat or, in Pedro’s case, if he was healing. That night a complex ritual was performed in order to conclude the phase of seclusion and fasting.<sup>144</sup> There were no meals or water all day until the early morning of Saturday, at 2am. At that time the ritual ended after the healers prayed and she fed us from her hands, putting water from the *nabaich* (Chapter 1) into our mouths, a tiny piece of *timaich*, a piece of roasted squirrel meat, and a pinch of salt. After that we were allowed to ingest salt again and we had our first salty meal with chilli pepper and a Pepsi. Then we prepared hot chocolate –women made their own– to offer to the deities on the altar where we lit some candles as well. Then Pedro and his mother offered a new cloth they had made to Christ and the Virgin of Guadalupe, in order to conclude Counting Fridays (Chapter 2). That night we went to sleep about 4am. On Saturday morning we woke up at 7:30am to drink the cold chocolate we had left on top of the altar, and to start eating *timaich*. Then after 8 o’clock we dismantled the altar.

That morning all of us had breakfast at Pedro’s mother’s house. We were allowed to have meals with salt again, but other abstinences had to be kept for 15 more days. This is the stage known as *odhargan*. There are *mamkagim* who order this period for five more weeks, an equivalent time of the retreat. In this case, given the fact that Pedro had to go back to the city in order to start his classes, the *makgim* made an exception and she considered a week would be enough. That week we were even allowed to go into town, but we still had to

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<sup>144</sup> This corresponds to the *nabaich* or *mezcal* drinking ritual explained in chapter 1 as a way to ‘reaffirming humanity’.

sleep in the shelter. People consider this period as quite dangerous, mainly because of the contact with other people and the temptation to break abstinences.

That Wednesday morning, around 9am, all of us who had been in the retreat, whether for five weeks or one, went with the *makgim* to the top of the Naksir tam, Scorpion Hill, where there is a small chapel. Inside we delivered our last ceremonial duties: lit candles, offered flowers, a couple of coins, a handful of *tuisap* (toasted ground corn flour), and prayers. It took approximately half an hour. At the end, in a stone basin located approximately three meters outside and westwards from the chapel, we deposited the items we used in the ritual: flowers, the crown known as *si'lhik*, a feathered stick and clay cup.

Then we all went together to pay a visit to the church in Juktir. There was a crowd that day because a former community governor and prominent leader, Juan Soto Mendoza was being buried in the Church's atrium.<sup>145</sup> We discretely went into the church. Once there, Pedro and his mother returned to the *tupil* (sacristan) the pieces of cloth belonging to the major Christ and Virgin of Guadalupe they had borrowed at the beginning of the month. They gave him the new pieces of cloth they had made for those deities. Then we offered some coins and lit one small wax candle each. We stayed there on our knees praying in silence until the candles were consumed. At around 12:30pm we crossed ourselves and left.

At the end of the sixth week on Friday we finished eating our ceremonial tamales. On the Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> of February Pedro and I took a shower, destroyed the shelter and went to Durango City.

#### BECOMING A MAKGIM

When does a novice become a healer and how does it happen? The *makgim* told Pedro he was ready to start healing, despite his admitting that he would not know how. Furthermore, many people state that there are not young *mamkagim* and that they are normally mature and respected men and women.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> A place exclusively reserved for former authorities and *xiotalh* leaders.

<sup>146</sup> As an outstanding exception, currently there is a well-known young healer working in Santa María de Ocotán and its vicinity.

Knowing that Pedro was a law student with a forthcoming career, the first time I interviewed him about his initiation I asked if he sees himself as a healer in the future. Without a doubt he said 'yes'. He argued that since *mamkagim* are normally people over 50 years, he thought it possible to work as a lawyer first and then to retire and dedicate himself to healing. Furthermore, both jobs can be compatible since the *mamkagim* are seen as intermediaries advocating for their patients before the deities, and it is in this regard they are often referred to in Spanish as '*abogados*', lawyers.

Once the healer told Pedro he was ready to start healing in a very basic way, how this happens remains a mystery. It is possible to investigate this through the testimonies of experienced *mamkagim*. It is common that a newcomer starts performing healing processes while they assist more accomplished *mamkagim* in their work (like an apprentice). It often happens when a close relative, like the father or the mother, is a *makgim* too. However, it does not always happen in the same way and deciding to show up as a healer is an important decision because afterwards, the new *makgim* cannot deny helping others.

Manuel Flores, an experienced healer from Juktir, explained to me how he was afraid to start healing people, but the deities forced him by threatening his life if he refused:

I was 18 years old and I was already trained as a healer. My father trained me when I was a kid,<sup>147</sup> but I had never healed anyone. Then two people (at different times) came to see me and asked me for help but I did not find the courage and I hid myself from them. But shortly after a scorpion stung one of my fingertips and I got sick.<sup>148</sup> I was just lying down and I was unable to stand up. It was a warning [from gods]. I had no food for some days and then [while dreaming] I started coming up steps, one step, two steps, three steps until I saw a beautiful church. I went in and there someone asked me:

—Who are you looking for?

—For our father Jesus— I replied

Then I was conducted to see the secretary and she asked me the same question and I replied in the same way. Then our fathers, Saint Michael, Saint John and Saint Peter appeared. They took out a very thick book and started checking it. There was a list of people and my name at the end. There was a huge calendar as well with so many colours: white,

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<sup>147</sup> His father was Pedro Flores, one of the most prominent healers when he was alive and well known because reached 120 years of age.

<sup>148</sup> Scorpions in this region of Mexico are among the most dangerous in the world and people can easily die.

red, yellow, black, all of them. Then they checked it and said —oh yeah, your name is right there. If you want to stay alive you must cure anyone who asks you, but if you deny them you are not leaving this place. What do you think, are you going to cure people or not? Because the other day someone asked for your help and you denied it. —

—Yes, of course, I will do it— I said.

After that they sent me back accompanied by two horse riders riding two beautiful black horses. I was riding behind one of them and I was hanging onto the saddle. We were coming down [from heaven] and they left me there in Matalcha'm.<sup>149</sup> I was able to see the Naksir tam hill from there. Then I returned home walking and I started waking up little by little. Thereafter, I started healing everyone who asked for help

(Manuel Flores, Santa María de Ocotán, 15<sup>th</sup> of January, 2009).

Cesareo Morales from Juktir explains that before he began healing by himself, even before he discovered he was a healer, he assisted another *makgim*. It was around 1980-81, he was 20 years old and he remembers he was *tupil* for the first time in Juktir's church. At that time, his cousin who is a healer invited Cesareo to accompany him while healing. It was a soul's banishment ceremony and when the moment arrived his cousin asked him to 'stretch the threads out' (Chapter 6). Cesareo refused by arguing he was not a *makgim*. His cousin insisted and told Cesareo —yes, you are a healer—. Then he did it, but as he says, —I was very nervous and my hands were shaking. Anyway, I did it—. After that the healer asked him for conduct on the the prayers (*dar parte*)<sup>150</sup> but he definitively refused and his cousin said —it is OK, but listen and pay attention because you are a healer—. Cesareo's cousin invited him twice more to be with him while healing. As a consequence, the first time Cesareo had to perform as a *makgim* in 2007 (and being 47 years old) he already knew what to do. That time was a very important occasion. The governor from Santa María de Ocotán asked him to be one of three *mamkagim* performing the soul's banishment ceremony of six dead former communal *xiotalh* leaders. Cesareo was the second in charge which implies that he was following directions from the principal healer. After this, he performed such healing on his own.

Conducting the prayers, *dar parte*, is one of the most important skills that healers and *xiotalh* ceremonial leaders must master. While Pedro and I were in

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<sup>149</sup> That is the highest peak in Santa María de Ocotán, and people say it is the 'healer's peak'.

<sup>150</sup> *Dar parte* or 'the dispatch' is a formal prayer that *mamkagim* pronounce while healing (Chapter 6).

the retreat, in the company of the *makgim*, Pedro openly asked her how he would learn to *dar parte*. She told him that at first she was quite nervous, but that one has to ask god's help to say such words. Months later Pedro was a patient of a different *makgim* and he posited the same question. That healer told him that one learns by hearing another *mamkagim*, mainly while being healed, like Pedro had been. Additionally, he told Pedro it is important to not only copy others, since every *makgim* has its own way. 'Shamanism is like acting or playing music -received knowledge and training combined with originality, skill, and performance. To know what you are saying and doing, you must add something of yourself' (Hugh-Jones 1996: 35).

## CONCLUSIONS

The relationship with the forest ancestors is as needed as it is dangerous. This gods and spirits are responsible for both, causing and healing illness. Since illness is defined as an imbalance in the relationship between humans and deities, it is a condition which has to be amended by the intervention of a *makgim*, otherwise people are in perpetual danger of dying. Many of these spirits are dangerous and from the underworld and people have to get involved in a relationship with them through the initiation in the forest. In this way, 'ordinary people' make themselves stronger against diseases. Conversely, the *mamkagim* create a closer relationship with gods which makes them capable of healing and inflict damage to others.

The production of ritual objects such as arrows is central during the retreat. These objects are both, a reproduction of oneself, the gods to which one addresses prayers, and, especially in the case of healers, they are gods' weapons as well, the weapons that they need to dominate and kill diseases (Cf. Neurath 2013: 44; Cf. Preuss 1998: 252; Reyes 2010a). The attributes of the arrows such as colours and feathers are related to these aspects of the weapons. In Pedro's case, he fashioned the weapons against those 'green, white and red worms he will be able to cure. The different feathers are related to different type of deities as well (Neurath 2013: 44; Cf. Preuss 1998: 108). For instance, the arrows the healers use to cure from *sudi' matim*, 'the water fear', have attached feathers of the *switch* (apparently a type of ibis), a bird whose

natural habitat is rivers and lakes, and their diet consists primarily of small aquatic prey, such as insects and small fishes, which are related to such diseases.

The arrows constitute a physical manifestation of this new relation. People say that the *biñak* constitute the pillar of their strength, 'they are like roots'. Willett et al. (2013: 21) define '*biñak*' as 'having confidence', although they do not refer to the arrows. However, I define *jix biñak* as 'his strength'. The particle *jix* is not a possessive prefix, but a copula marker that expresses qualities (García 2014: 88-94; Willett 1991: 67-69). Consequently, the expression *jix biñak* and its physical manifestation constitute an O'dam idiom for the knowledge that people acquire in the context of the retreat, through the process of becoming *xidhuukam* as an epistemological process (Conclusions Part I), resulting in the constitution of a more accomplished person. This knowledge is recreated by the novices every day through fasting, praying, and smoking, like gods do, and it is also revealed in a dream-vision and through the exegesis provided by the healer.

## Conclusion to Part I

### Being *xidhuukam*: an epistemological process to know the world

The relation between the O'dam and their deities is, as the O'dam say, 'quite complicated'. Not only because it demands so much ritual work, but also because it entails many contradictions: on one side the O'dam differentiate themselves most from the deities, in order to make themselves human: on the other, they must approach and emulate the gods to receive life from them. In a way, it is a relationship which cannot be ignored, otherwise, death cannot be overcome. Approaching the gods at any level of proximity requires one to 'cleanse oneself' by undertaking the ritual abstinences and entering the state that the O'dam call *xidhuukam* or 'to be blessed'. It entails refraining from: any physical contact with the opposite sex, drinking alcohol, and getting angry. However, there are different ritual contexts with specific rules about these abstinences. In this conclusion, I specifically want to call attention to what is known as 'fasting for a month in the forest', since this constitutes a very specialised context not only allowing for close contact with the deities, but also in constructing knowledge about the world, which includes people and, more importantly, the realm of gods.

By rendering *xidhuukam*, an analytical category, it is possible to observe how the O'dam set a relation between the existent world (ontology) and the process of knowing it (epistemology) (Toren 2009: 135).<sup>151</sup> In this light, we can better understand the O'dam statement that their healers 'learn how to become healers by themselves, by fasting for a month in the forest'. This way of knowing the realm of the deities rests on the principle that this knowledge is available by behaving like the deities, by embodying their practices and making oneself temporarily different from other humans, seeking to know the world from the perspective of the gods. This reveals a model of knowledge in which people know what people do (Cf. Crook 2009: 98), in which many things go without

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<sup>151</sup> To render categories analytical requires firstly that they are, from our perspective, analysable; and second, to demonstrate their 'purchase on the world', their lived validity (Toren 2009: 135).



saying (Bloch 1992), but eventually drives us to a better understanding of what people say.

While fasting in the forest, all the novices, including those who are not destined to be healers, acquire esoteric knowledge by fashioning arrows, smoking, and praying, which is after all, what the *makgim* do while healing. All these actions are related to one another being part of an 'ensemble of techniques for knowing' (Townesley 1993: 452).<sup>152</sup>

This way of knowing can be defined as putting into practice a somatic capacity (Vilaça 1999; Viveiros de Castro 2013: 445) which in this case is similar to the way of relating not only to the gods but also with the alterity of the Mestizo world (not to mention that many gods are Mestizos) by the embodiment of practices like eating specific food, wearing a type of cloth, or speaking a certain language. By this token, the knowledge that O'dam children recreate at school, is more about the Mestizo way of socialisation by being in the classroom, speaking Spanish, eating the foreign food provided by the State than about the information contained in the books or presented by the teachers. In the scope of the initiation in the forest, these corporeal practices are about fasting, smoking, making and using the paraphernalia, praying, and finally dreaming, and so obtaining esoteric knowledge. The retreat provides a way of 'relating mundane understanding of the nature of things with an imaginative reaching out to processes that were not known in an ordinary common sense way' (Humphrey and Onon 1996: 51). An individual who has never participated in these retreats only has a vague idea about the use and attributes of the *biñak*,<sup>153</sup> not because there is a 'high reserved knowledge' involved, but because it is only through fashioning and using *biñak*, that one knows what it is involved –the type of feathers, the colours, etcetera – (Reyes 2010a),<sup>154</sup> as well

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<sup>152</sup> Shamanic knowledge 'is not a system of knowledge or facts known, but rather an ensemble of techniques for knowing' (Townesley 1993: 452). This also implies considering knowledge as a skill, not as 'information' (Ingold 2001: 114).

<sup>153</sup> It is important to notice that even if the relatives have *biñak* and they can talk about them, the objects remain in their cases and people only bring them out in retreats.

<sup>154</sup> Under the premise that here are not pure forms of art or ritual, but 'intermediary forms', as it was stated by Aby Warburg (Careri 2003; Neurath 2013: 125), understanding these objects and the knowledge associated is only manageable by studying their process of creation instead of their final sate (Kindl and Neurath 2008; Araiza 2010).

as knowing how to control them, which what we can say is 'the secret of their origin' (Cf. Severi, 1993: 173).

The arrows as the outcome of the retreat in the forest are 'components of a technology' (Gell 1999: 162),<sup>155</sup> and the mastery to make these derives from the ritual practices and the self-sacrifice the novices go through in their creation.<sup>156</sup> These objects are only powerful and successfully endowed with *agency* (Gell 1998: 7) if the novices get the right vision in dreams, which novices only manage by the end of the retreat, if they do not fail. In this regard the O'dam case becomes relevant in criticising the overrated role that many studies grant to hallucinogenic substances as a way to manage 'ecstasies' or 'altered states of conscious' in shamanic practices (Cf. Eliade 1964; Cf. Furst 1972; Wasson 1998: 277).<sup>157</sup> But beside the facts that these terms lack descriptive precision and are analytically problematic (Hamayon 2007 [1993]), it is more important to highlight that among the O'dam there is not any situation that we can remotely describe as such, and that tobacco does not induce any type of hallucinations (Cf. Wilbert 1972: 55).<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, focusing on the biochemical effects of tobacco, which the O'dam do not ignore, makes us digress from the social conditions that people set through its use. First of all, tobacco is an ancestor itself very often referred to in prayers as Tobacco Our Father and Tobacco Our Mother (a parallelistic formula reserved for deities, Chapter 4). In this character, tobacco's main attribute is to be a messenger, and for that reason the O'dam call it the 'sacred mail' (Cf. Benítez 1980: 192; Cf. Sánchez 1980: 113).<sup>159</sup> But to send a message, this message has to be uttered

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<sup>155</sup> Gell (1999: 162) argues that works of art are the outcome of a technical process in which artist are skill. However, as I described (chapters 1 and 3) the 'technical' skills to make an arrow are in a way accessible to anyone, 'anyone can make it', but not anyone can efficiently make it and this requires an ensemble of techniques (Townesley 1993: 452) which also involves fasting, praying and dreaming.

<sup>156</sup> The sculptures of the saints in the church are in a similar situation since they require the ritual actions from a group of *mamkagim* to become alive.

<sup>157</sup> Wasson (1998: 275) affirms that 'ecstasy is the essence of shamanism'. Entheogens became central in shamanic studies in Mexico as a result of the psychedelic boom in the 1960s (Cf. Neurath 2006: 74), alongside the publication of Castaneda's book *The Teachings of Don Juan* (Castaneda 1968).

<sup>158</sup> Contrary, while observing a central an extended use of tobacco in North and South American shamanism, Wilbert (1972: 55) argues that tobacco is one of the most important vehicles to ecstasy. He also clarifies that in order to induce narcotic effects, tobacco has to be combined with other plants (Wilbert 1972: 57).

<sup>159</sup> As Levi-Strauss (2002 [1966]: 50) notices, tobacco is used very often in the Americas to attract the spirits' attention and communicate with them. In this case, the messages go the other way around too.

under the right conditions which in this case is praying alongside fashioning arrows and smoking. Eventually, if the novices succeed, the gods not only receive the message, but they also reply by delivering messages in the form of visions in dreams.<sup>160</sup> Consequently, dreams and arrows are a 'concrete' form of the knowledge that people acquire in the context, and as I discuss in Chapter 3, *jix biñak*, 'their strength', constitute an Idiom for this knowledge.

The knowledge that the O'dam construct in the context of the forest is there, with a certain amount available to anyone, not only to those destined to be healers. This allows everyone to experience the type of knowledge that the *mamkagim* are able to control. However, in principle only those who are destined to become *makgim* become skilful in actively engaging and acting in the realm of dreams by acting consciously and controlling their actions in their dreams. While ordinary people need a *makgim* to speak on their behalf, the *mamkagim* act as mediators for other people. After all, the *mamkagim* are, as they say, their lawyers.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Even for the Huichol who get involved in the consumption of peyote early in life, significant powerful visions are not only granted by eating the cactus and having hallucinations, the meaningful visions are only achieved as a result of the practice of collective rituals, it is more the result of a social activity than from a chemical effect (Neurath 2006: 65, 74, 75).

<sup>161</sup> It is important to mention that in the case of an ill *makgim*, this requires the intervention of another healer to speak on his behalf as well.

## Introduction to Part II

Part II is dedicated to those individuals considered as specialists within the scope of interaction between humans and deities that I approached in Part I: *xiotalh* leaders, the courthouse officers, and the *mamkagim* or healers. The first and the third fall into the categories of people that I have defined in Chapter 2 as having ‘lifelong relationships’ with deities, while the second are people in the way of becoming themselves communal ancestors. The order of their presentation in the following chapters correspond to the order that I follow in Part I, discussing the *xiotalh* leaders first and exploring the healers’ performance at the end.

In this section, it becomes clear that the relations between humans and deities are framed by a wider sphere of interaction with alterity, which also includes the Mestizo-world, which in this case is mainly represented by the Mexican state. Chapters 4 and 5 present examples of this, examining the way in which communal authorities deal with different alterities and how these relations are, at the same time, the product of three different periods of O’dam history: the pre-Hispanic (*xiotalh* leaders), the Colonial (courthouse officers) and the Republican 20<sup>th</sup> century (agrarian authorities). With this in mind, I distance myself from the *Sistemas de Cargo* approach introduced in the 1930’s by Radcliffe-Brown, Redfield, and their students (Medina 1996), and subsequently widely developed by Mexican academics.<sup>162</sup> From this vantage point, the authors set an artificially sharp separation between the *xiotalh* leaders and the church officers considered as ‘religious’ authorities on one side, and the ‘civil’ authorities of the courthouse on the other (Cf. Escalante 1994). This position hides the religious nature of the courthouse officers, as if they functioned in accordance with the Mexican law and obeyed the separation of Church and State. Furthermore, from this perspective, it is not possible to appreciate O’dam people’s own characterisation of the relations between themselves and the

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<sup>162</sup> The texts that previously discussed the Tepehuan case (Cf. Escalante 1994; Cf. Sánchez 1980) have not abandoned the basic model proposed by Sol Tax (1937: 442) for Guatemala, known as the ‘typical cargo system’. This rests on a strong division between civil and religious authorities, which sets a progressive ‘alternation between the secular and sacred hierarchies, so that the two are effectively linked’ (Tax 1937: 442).

Mexican state, as mediated by the courthouse officers (which can be as delicate as the relations that the healers have with spirits).

In this section we can also appreciate the similarities, but more importantly the differences, between the *xiotalh* leaders and the *mamkagim*. From a general and superficial perspective, both of these specialists could be defined as ‘shamans’, alluding to their attributes as mediators between humans, the ancestral gods, and the spirits (Descola 2014: 49; Narby and Huxley 2001; Vitebsky 2001: 10;).<sup>163</sup> However, as we examine the roles of such ritual specialists in more detail, the emptiness of the concept ‘shaman’ (Descola 2012: 51) surfaces and becomes evident. Consequently, local categories, as expressed in O’dam terms for these specialists, are more relevant to our analysis, reflecting the fact that each one follows a different path of initiation and acts in different ritual contexts. This contrast between the *xiotalh* leaders recalls the cases of ‘dual shamanism’ otherwise common in Amazonian societies (Crocker 1985: 313; Hugh-Jones 1996), and the distinction between ‘shamans’ and ‘priests’ made earlier in the nineteenth century (Cf. Müller 1855 cited in Neurath 2008c: 13). I return to this discussion in the conclusion of Part II, having described the O’dam cases in more depth.

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<sup>163</sup> Beyond the discussion about the accuracy of using the terms ‘shamans’ or ‘shamanism’ for Amerindian societies or outside Siberia (Harvey 2003; Cf. Van Gennep (2001 [1903]) I recognise in ‘shamanism’ a field of anthropological reflexion related to the scope specialist in the interaction between humans, gods, and spirits. For a detailed account of the introduction and use of the term ‘shaman’ in Mexican academy see Martínez (2007).

## Chapter 4

### The *xiotalh* leaders

The ancestors dreamt they should establish a *xiotalh* in the place where they find a deer; they also dreamt that it should be led by the *señor notaxte*, by his assistant the *umuagim*, and by the women's leader named *tua'dam*. The gods told [the ancestors]: on the *xiotalh* patio you will bless the maize and everything that you eat, you will pray for the rains and for abundant game animals. Tomorrow morning you will form the patio.

Aciano de la Rosa Calleros in Benítez (1980: 137)

#### INTRODUCTION

In September 2011 I was on my way to Juktir when I found two *chiatnarak* (people from Chianarkam) waiting for a lift. On our way they told me that the celebration of the communal *xiotalh* in Chianarkam had been delayed because, earlier in the year, the ceremonial leader had passed away. It was precisely in this community where in 2007, in collaboration with the courthouse officers, I participated in a 'souls' banishment ceremony' (Chapter 6) for four former communal *xiotalh* leaders.<sup>164</sup> Before this ceremony, people attributed their community's internal disagreements and confrontations, as well as poor harvests, to their reckless failure to save the souls of the communal ancestors. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the interaction between humans and the gods of maize agriculture and hunting takes place in the *xiotalh* ceremonial centres. In this regard, the *xiotalh* leaders are the qualified intermediaries between humans and gods, being themselves 'living ancestors', impersonating those ancestors who manage to become deities through their self-sacrifice. In this chapter, I describe the character of these specialists in their role as intermediaries between humans and gods, as well as their character as living ancestors. To this end, I focus on the ritual actions conducted by the leaders during the *xiotalh*, paying special attention to acts of praying as means of delivering

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<sup>164</sup> I worked closely with the courthouse officers in writing and submitting an application for governmental resources via the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Populations (CDI), for the expenses incurred for the ceremony, particularly the four calves (one per deceased person) required for the celebration.

messages from humans to gods, and as a way of explicitly *deferring* (Bloch 2005) their acts to the deified ancestors.

#### THE DEIFIED ANCESTORS AND THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE PLANET VENUS

Each *nii'kartam* or *xiotalh* patio has its own set of leaders, usually two men, the *kikam* and the *umuagim*, and a woman, the *tua'dam*. Their ancestral character is confirmed by their activities in this ritual space, and it is explicitly manifest in their prayers when they allude to the *xiotalh* founders, who are at the same time themselves, through the parallelistic formula and the kinship terms 'our father, our mother', generally reserved in prayers to refer to the deities (Cf. Willett 1996: 209):<sup>165</sup>

O'dam	English
kikam jich chat	<i>kikam</i> our father
kikam jich nan	<i>kikam</i> our mother
umuagim jich chat	<i>umuagim</i> our father
umuagim jich nan	<i>umuagim</i> our mother
tua'dam jich chat	<i>tua'dam</i> our father
tua'dam jich nan	<i>tua'dam</i> our mother

#### (Appendix 1)

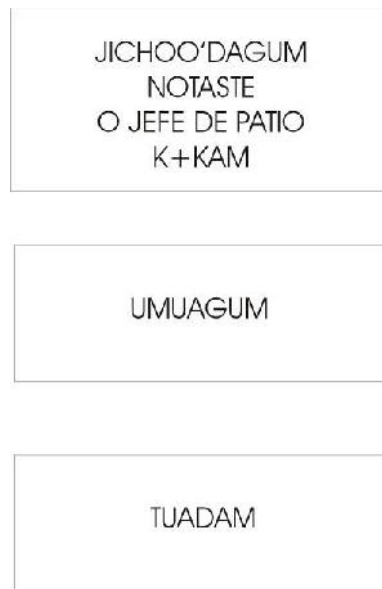
Ideally, each *xiotalh* patio has a main leader called the *kikam* (literally 'the one standing up'), at least one male assistant called the *umuagim* (literally 'the inviter'), and a female leader known as the *tua'dam* (literally 'the masher').<sup>166</sup> The term *kikam* is generally reserved for kinship patios while in the communal ceremonial centres the equivalent position is known as *jix oo'dagim* (literally 'the powerful one')<sup>167</sup> or *notaxte* (Reyes 2010a: 19), possibly of Náhuatl origin.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>165</sup> It is important to notice that this formula is applied to deities regardless of whether their 'human' impersonators are men or women.

<sup>166</sup> This term is also used when referring to other women helping to grind corn during the Christian festivals, but it is always reserved for ritual contexts.

<sup>167</sup> This is a free translation based on what O'dam people say it means to them. However, Willett (1996: 200) interprets it as 'our chief religious authority', where 'oo' is a root for 'father'.

The name *jix oo'dagim* displays and leaves no room for doubt about its ancestral character, '*dagim*' is the term designating many 'lords' and spirits such as Muki' dagim, the Lord of the Dead.



**Diagram 4 The ideal structure of the *xiotalh* leaders**

There are many exceptions to this ideal, threefold structure. In Santiago Teneraca, it is common for the *xiotalh* patios to have two male assistants, an *umuagim* and a second called the *baimalh* or *baimilh* ('bringer' [of people]), as well as a *tua'dam* (Reyes 2010a: 52). Conversely, in the communal *xiotalh* patio in San Francisco de Ocotán there is a *jix oo'dagim* and an *umuagim*, while the wives of the courthouse officers fulfil the duties of the *tua'dam*, and for this reason it rotates every year. On the other hand, kinship *xiotalh* in this community stands out because the sets of leaders are integrated only by the *kikam* and the *tua'dam*.<sup>169</sup>

The *xiotalh* leaders impersonate the ancestors who in primordial times managed to transform themselves into deities, through the practice of self-

<sup>168</sup> However, it is common that people interchange the three of these names, especially in communal patios.

<sup>169</sup> In this community the ceremony is mainly known as *daañi'*.



sacrifice and ritual abstinence.<sup>170</sup> As the epigraph expresses, mythological accounts state that the first *xiotalh* was celebrated on the morning after they found the deer they were hunting. Consequently, the celebration of the first *xiotalh*, and of every *xiotalh* since, corresponds to the first sunrise and the beginning of the human age. The 'original' *xiotalh* celebration was a liminal period for the whole world in transition from a primordial world to its current form and order. It corresponds to the 'great mythical separation'. It is a transition from the time of the ancestors, when humans and other beings were able to communicate without the intervention of shamans,<sup>171</sup> to the time of humans, in a dryer and harder world transformed by the sun's apparition: 'then everyone went [to the *xiotalh*], but those who came this way towards the hill of Tobaso [*sic*] were caught by the dawn before they had arrived, and they stayed there on the hill changed into stone because they could not arrive on time for the first *mitote*' (Hobgood 1970: 406).



**Image 30 Las Cabezas, 'the heads', near Juktir. The Pilgrims who were late on their way to the first *xiotalh***

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<sup>170</sup> As 'authorities' they are different from the courthouse officers who, on the other hand, are humans in the process of becoming ancestors (Chapter 5).

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Lévi-Strauss (2008 [1985]: 16); López Austin 1998: 53-70; Viveiros de Castro (1998: 472).

O'dam mythology attributes the foundation of the *xiotalh* to the gods associated with the planet Venus, to whom the *xiotalh* leaders are also related. However, the character of planet Venus in mythology and rituals in the Gran Nayar area is quite ambivalent, given that it can be, at the same time, the Morning and the Evening Stars. As Neurath (2005c: 75) explains:

Venus is one person as well as two. That means the contrasting aspects of Venus are related through antagonism and, simultaneously, through identification. Again and again, the planetary hero transforms himself into his alter ego –and it really depends on the specific context as to which of the two aspects is the "self" and which is the "other".<sup>172</sup>

The *xiotalh* leaders, particularly the two males, reproduce the relation between the astral twins, the Morning and the Evening Stars. They are at the same time the cultural hero and the transgressor, characters who are otherwise broadly portrayed by Amerindian mythology (Brotherston 1992: 266; Lévi-Strauss 1992).<sup>173</sup> Their ambivalent character makes it impossible to sharply define one of the leaders with one of the aspects of the planet Venus. Furthermore, in O'dam mythology, this identification is complicated by the fact that the names of these characters are barely mentioned, and the accounts regularly attribute such actions instead to 'one boy', 'one woman', 'one young man', etcetera. Despite this, the *xiotalh* leaders possess features that allow us to associate them with these astral deities.

The basic account, as told across the entire Gran Nayar area, holds that there were two brothers running in a race. The older brother arrived later because he stopped to have sex with a woman. Given his failure to attend to the required ritual abstinences, he was demoted to the west and became the Evening Star, changing places with his younger brother, who became the older brother and is located in the east (Neurath 2005c). Among the *xiotalh* leaders,

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<sup>172</sup> Preuss ([1929] cited in Neurath 2005c) defined the different aspects of the planet Venus as being the Morning Star the active god of corn, the planter, and the Evening Star the passive god of corn, as the maize plant. However, the German ethnologist warns against expecting a well-organised pantheon since, it is precisely such transformative aspects, which allows us to understand the link between the planet-god and the agricultural-hunting cult in the Gran Nayar area. This transformative logic is also found in stories about the Sun and his transformation into the Night Sun (Neurath 2005c: 75-76).

<sup>173</sup> Lévi-Strauss (1992: 167-178) highlights the power attributed by North American Indians to twins in regard to meteorological phenomena (rains, winds, storms, fog, etc.), and in hunting and fishing.

the figure of the *kïkam* stresses an association with the Morning Star as the ancestor who was able to hold abstinences, while the *umuagim* emphasises the features of his alter-ego. An O'dam account tells of the *xiotalh* participants hunting deer (all heading off in different directions). After a while, when they all returned to the *xiotalh* patio, they realized that one of the stars was missing. The eagle found him later and noticed that he was in pain. The eagle asked him what had happened and the star replied that he 'sinned with a woman'.<sup>174</sup> The eagle cured his pain and both returned to the *xiotalh* patio. Once there, Our Father banished the star to the west as punishment, saying that he would no longer herald the dawn: 'you will not open the door of dawn any more' (Benítez 1980 118-119).<sup>175</sup> This account makes more sense, in regard to the *xiotalh* leader's identification, when related to another story I have registered in Juktir. In this account, the *umuagim* goes through *la sierra* inviting people to attend the nearest *xiotalh*. After a while, the 'inviter' does not return to the patio and people notice his absence and wonder where he can be. The gecko was there and he told the people, "I saw him doing this", while doing push ups (the characteristic movement of the gecko) and denouncing the failure of the *umuagim*. For this reason people identify the *umuagim* with the *chamoï'kam*, 'the one who failed',<sup>176</sup> who is at the same time one of the deities most in-demand for healing: 'he helps us because he failed as we do', people say.<sup>177</sup> In contrast, we can posit that the *kïkam* or the *jix oo'dagim*, 'the powerful one', corresponds to the impersonation of the brother who was able to adhere to the abstinences and thus takes his place in the east. Furthermore, during prayers in Chianarkam, the *jix oo'dagim* bears a bow and a quiver with arrows hanging from his right arm, all of these being the most remarkable emblems of the Morning Star.

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<sup>174</sup> 'To sin' among the O'dam normally refers to breaking the abstinences while participating in a ceremony, resulting in an imbalance in their relations with deities that is considered illness; to be 'in pain'.

<sup>175</sup> This reference was originally published in Spanish and it is impossible to verify which word the narrator is using in O'dam for 'the star'. In my experience, when talking about Morning or Evening Stars, it is uncommon to use a generic word. The O'dam normally mention something like *xialip kam jinch xiix* (our older brother from the east) or *jurunip kam jinch xix* (our older brother from the west), etc., which helps us to understand the star's position.

<sup>176</sup> The *chamoï'kam* is the tutelary deity in some kinship *xiotalh*. In the zoological register, while the main tutelary deities are identified with different type of eagles and hawks, the *chamoï'kam* is the name of one type of roadrunner, a bird incapable of flight.

<sup>177</sup> This ancestor has a well-known shrine in a cave close to the village of Muincha'm, known in Spanish as Santa María Magdalena Taxicaringa.

Besides the two male leaders, such accounts rarely mention the *tua'dam*, except for her allusion as the women's leader, as stated in the epigraph. However, the transformative aspects of these deities, expressed through a 'change of perspective' between the hunter and the prey,<sup>178</sup> or between the cultivator and the plant (Neurath 2005c: 90), are also reflected in the relation between the *tua'dam* and the male ceremonial leaders. The deer, the prey par excellence, no doubt has a female character in this context, as is explicitly stated in this narration registered by Benítez (1980: 126-127):

The men went out to hunt, but they found no trail. The fourth day Our Father commanded that the hunter's older sister to sit down on the ground and this she did, leaving there the mark of her buttocks.<sup>179</sup> The hunters saw the track and then returned to the patio. The *kikam* asked them:

-Where is the deer?

-There is no deer. We only found a track and we do not know to whom it belongs.

-That is the deer. That is the deer's track. Go and hunt it. We will offer its blood to the corn-girl who is dying in the fields.

Then God Our Father commands the girl to go into the forest and to run when she finds the hunters. They ran after her and killed her with an arrow; then they realized it was their older sister [...]

On their return, the one who hunted the sister arrived first and the *kikam* told him:

-You will be the Older Brother Deer, Saint Michael the Archangel the good 'arrow shooter'.

By naming this deity 'the Older Brother Deer, Saint Michael the Archangel the good arrow shooter', in this account highlights the transformative and assimilative aspects between the hunter and the prey. Considering that the deer is identified as female, it is worth recalling the account I referred to in Chapter 1, in which it is 'the mother' herself, probably 'Our Mother' the *tua'dam*, who decides to leave 'her track' on the ground in order to 'make the hunters sin'. The hunters find a deer track and they 'play around' sticking their arrows into it. In this case, it is possible to identify the hunters with the *chamoi'kam* (the

<sup>178</sup> An action that Amazonian *perspectivism* has examined in depth (Viveiros de Castro 2013).

<sup>179</sup> This story was published in Spanish and it is not possible to know what word in O'dam was used here for '*nalgas*', buttock. However, in similar stories I have heard the narrators refer to the female sexual organs.

*umuagim*, 'the one who failed') and the prey with the *tua'dam*. However, given their transformative and ambiguous features, it is important not to insist on trying to sharply and clearly define and identify these deities with the *xiotalh* leaders. Furthermore, the three (or more) *xiotalh* leaders must be approached together and considered as the transformation of one to the other. They are all the hunters and the prey, and have male as well as female attributes. For example, the *tua'dam* not only exhibits the same paraphernalia as the *kikam* and the *umuagim*, but in contrast to other women is also obliged to cultivate her own corn, to offer on the *xiotalh* patio as all men do.

The three *xiotalh* leaders simultaneously portray the attributes of both hunter and prey, mainly as exhibited in their paraphernalia: arrows, feathers, pipe, tobacco, and the characteristic headdress named *mukax*.<sup>180</sup> Bearing these objects, the *xiotalh* leaders (and the *mamkagim*) articulate an action of *ritual condensation* (Cf. Houseman and Severi 1994), creating a complex image by the assimilation of contradictory identities where the arrows and the other feathered sticks are hunting weapons; the feathers come from hawks and eagles, which are among the most important predators in *la sierra*. The *xiotalh* leaders wear the *mukax*, the feathers, or the arrows on their heads in a way that is similar to deer antlers (Cf. Alcocer 2003:190), creating an image of the prey using the weapons and feathers of predators (Reyes 2010a: 291).

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<sup>180</sup> There are many *xiotalh* patios where participants only remember using the *mukax* in the past. However, people state that this is a ceremonial object and that every man should wear it during the *xiotalh*. In principle, the *xiotalh* leaders wear the *mukax*, which establishes a difference between them and the *mamkagim* or healers who wear a woven band *buraa'* on the head. However, nowadays it is very common that the *xiotalh* leaders use the *buraa'*, and that many of them are healers as well.



**Image 31 *Xiotalh* leader as ‘complex image’**

While the *xiotalh* leaders exhibit the arrow as a hunting instrument (and sometimes the bow, as in Chianarkam), the musician presents the bow. O’dam mythology clearly establishes that it was Jix kai’ chio’ñ, one of the deities associated with the Morning Star, who called for the first *xiotalh* and played the bow in that ceremony (Reyes 2006a: 88),<sup>181</sup> ‘the Ixcaitiung’<sup>182</sup> named the day on

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<sup>181</sup> Sánchez (1980: 105) reports that in the Au’dam community, San Bernardino de Milpillas Chico, the bow player is named *ixkaitcheo*. This name is similar to *jix kai’ chio’ñ*. In this regard it is also important to mention that the orthography currently used in O’dam and Au’dam writings was developed in the early 1980s (Willett 1991:35), and implemented at the end of that decade. In addition, the ‘j’, [h] at the beginning of words is not easy to hear for non-trained-non-native speakers, and this leads often to skipping it.

which the first *mitote* would be danced' (Hobgood 1970: 406). As Benítez registered (Benítez 1980: 123), 'a boy [the Morning Star] came down to earth, formed the *xiotalh* patio at Santa María [de Ocotán], sat down on his stool, and started playing [the bow] and singing. It was possible to hear the bow's sound all around the world'.<sup>183</sup>

Hobgood (1970: 406) also mentions in a footnote that other people assert that 'Ixcaitiung went from settlement to settlement teaching the people how to dance the *mitote* [...] after he showed the people how to do the first *mitote*, the Ixkaitiung went back to heaven'. This musician named *sokbolh* in O'dam (Chapter 1), performs during the *xiotalh* sitting on a stool facing eastwards with his back to the fire. The *sokbolh* holds the bow with one foot against a dried, hollow gourd on the ground. He also holds a wooden stick in each hand, and uses these to rhythmically strike the bowstring while intoning a song with short phrases or monosyllabic enunciations (Hobgood 1970: 402; Reyes 2006a: 219; Willett 1996: 202). The voice and the music of the *sokbolh* during the dance night are vehicles of communication between humans and non-human beings, which I will return to in the conclusion of this chapter. As a final comment about the musician in this section, it is important to mention that similar to the *xiotalh* leaders, there is an initiation process for the *sosokbolh* (plural), who must conduct retreats over three or five years, depending on their own kinship *xiotalh* tradition.<sup>184</sup> On the other hand and differently from the *xiotalh* leaders, the *sosokbolh* do not belong to any specific *xiotalh* patio and they perform by invitation in many.

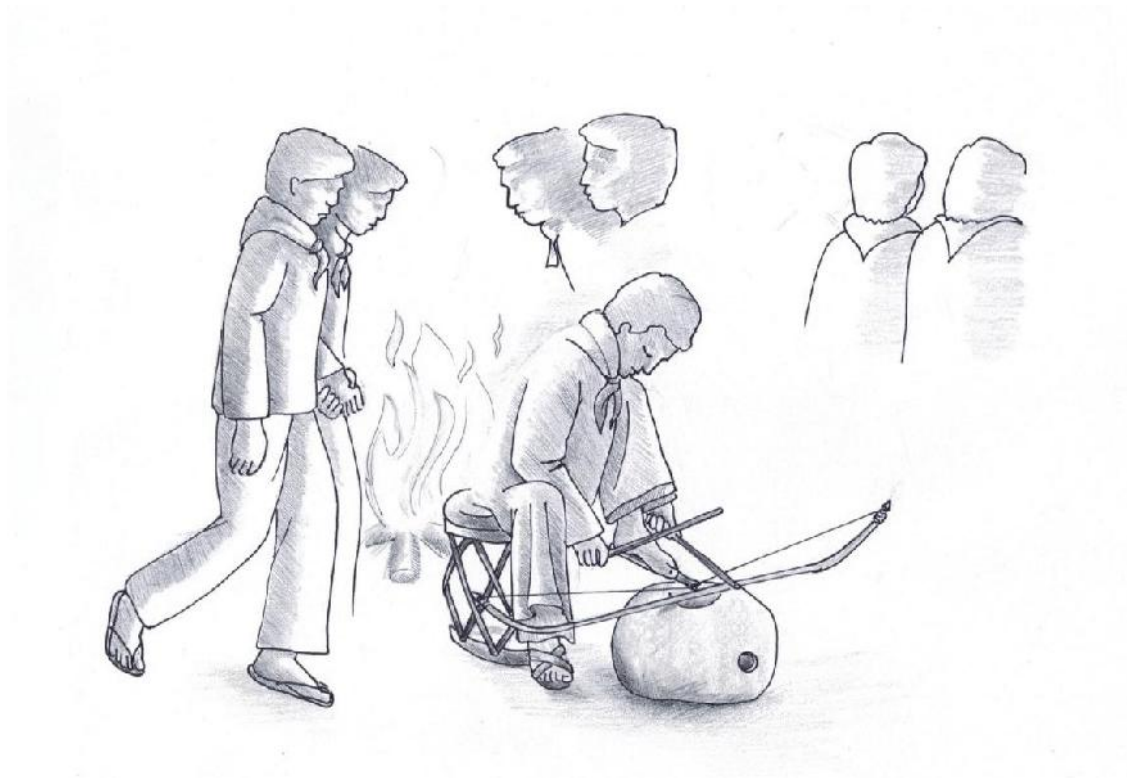
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<sup>182</sup> The author spells the word in this way. See previous footnote.

<sup>183</sup> My translation from Spanish.

<sup>184</sup> Hobgood (1970: 403) also mentions that the musicians used to deliver offerings to a landmark with the form of the bow, 'the one from the original *xiotalh*', which is located close to the town of Sombrete, Zacatecas.





**Image 32 The *sokbolh* playing the musical bow**

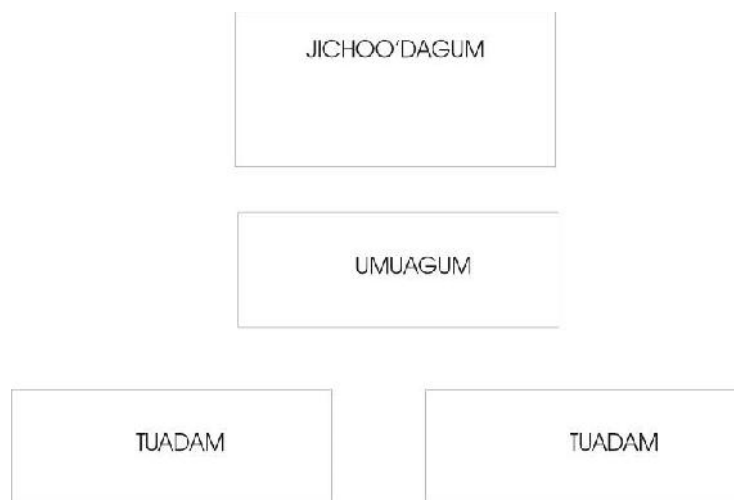
Supplementary to these images of the Morning Star there is the *jix kai'*, the head of the government in each community, who impersonates its active character as a hunter and grower. Nevertheless, since I am discussing these government officers in Chapter 5, it is enough to mention here that the *jix kai'* is responsible for calling the people together to participate in the *xiotalh* in the same way as *Jix kai' chio'ñ* in the primordial *xiotalh*.

#### THE *XIOTALH* LEADERS' INITIATION PROCESS

In the late 1970s Benítez (1980) and Sánchez (1980) mentioned there were three *xiotalh* leaders in the communal patio in Santa María de Ocotán, in a similar way as I have registered in many kinship *xiotalh*. However, this threefold structure of the *xiotalh* leaders is the ideal. Twenty years later in 1998, I registered five *ceremonial* leaders in the communal *xiotalh* in Santa María de Ocotán, three men and two women: the *jix oo'dagim* (or *notaxte*), the *umuagim*,



the *mamadam gu mai* and two *tua'dam*. At this time, the *jix oo'dagim* was a ten-year-old boy selected to substitute his deceased mother's brother two years earlier (Reyes 2006a: 75). The *mamadam gu mai* (literally 'the agave roaster'), was an old man who at that time was very much involved in the ritual education of the young leader. People said that he used to be a former *xiotalh* leader on another patio that had been abandoned by that time. His title refers to one of his ceremonial duties during the *xiotalh* prior to the rainy season, which was roasting the agave (century-plant) roots for the preparation of the fermented beverage (*mai baraa'*) that people drink during the ceremony (Reyes 2006a: 141-143). After the *mamadam gu mai* passed away in 2004, there remain four *xiotalh* leaders and since then the *umuagim* has been in charge of the agave roasting.<sup>185</sup> Further, in 1998, one of the *tua'dam* had been recently selected, because the other *xiotalh* leaders dreamt that it had to be done.



**Diagram 5 The communal *xiotalh* leaders in Santa María de Ocotán in 1998**

When I started visiting Santiago Teneraca in 2004 there were two active *xiotalh* leaders: the *jix oo'dagim* and the *tua'dam* (Reyes 2010a: 52), both over 70 years of age. People mentioned there was an *umuagim* but that he was too old, unable to walk, and incapable of attending the ceremonies. As I mentioned earlier, the *jix oo'dagim* that I met in 2004 died in early 2011. When I visited

<sup>185</sup> In 1979, Benítez (1980: 119) reported that the agave roasting was carried out by the *umuagim*.

Chianarkam later in May 2014, they had recently designated a new *xiotalh* leader who was five years old and was just starting his ritual education.<sup>186</sup>

The selection of new *xiotalh* leaders is ideally fulfilled one year after of the death of a former leader, during the banishment of the soul's ceremony.<sup>187</sup> It is expected during the ceremony that the healer in charge dreams and reveals the name of the newcomer. In kinship patios it is naturally expected that the newcomers belong to the kinship group (although there are exceptions as I describe below). In the communal *xiotalh*, the state of research in this respect points to a tendency toward keeping these positions in the same kinship groups, as I have documented in Santa María do Ocotán.<sup>188</sup> Here, the current *jix oo'dagim*, P. Torres, is the son of the sister of the former leader, while the latter was in turn the previous leader's 'nephew' and, according to Benítez (1980: 86), had no children because he was almost permanently *xidhuukam*, thus abiding by the ceremonial abstinences.<sup>189</sup> In a similar way, the current *umuagim* here confirmed that his father held the same ceremonial position before.

In many kinship *xiotalh* I have documented the exceptional situations in the succession process. In the Oikam *xiotalh* close to Aguilillas, in Santa María de Ocotán, the current *kikam* is the son of the former *kikam* and the oldest *umuagim* is the brother of the former *kikam*; in turn the youngest *umuagim* is the son of the older one. However, the *tua'dam* does not have the same family name. She explains this situation as a result of an illness she suffered when she was younger. At that time the healer revealed that she had to 'work' on that *xiotalh* patio because, when she was a little girl, she was fed corn that had been blessed there. As a result, the tutelary deities in this patio claimed her.

It is stated that at both communal and kinship level, it is preferable to choose young new ceremonial leaders to make their lifelong commitment

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<sup>186</sup> His grandfather is a former *jix kai'* and a renowned *makgim*.

<sup>187</sup> However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, there can be many reasons for delaying the celebrations.

<sup>188</sup> It is very difficult to track this information since *xiotalh* leaders are chosen for life and people only remember one or two generations previously.

<sup>189</sup> Unfortunately Benítez (1980: 86) does not record the native kinship term and only mentions 'his *sobrinio*'. All possible O'dam kinship terms that define the '*tio*' (uncle)-'*sobrinio*' (nephew) relationship can generate confusion in the translation into Spanish, since they are reciprocal and different for the mother's and father's siblings. This situation is complicated further given there is also a distinction between the older and the younger siblings (Cf. Willett et al. 2013: 207).

easier, given that adults already have a life and they find it difficult to change as a function of their new duties.<sup>190</sup> In general, besides their ceremonial responsibilities, the *xiotalh* leaders have a life like any other person in the community: they have families and grow their own maize. However, this is more complicated for the communal leaders. Very often, the *xiotalh* is extended from one to five consecutive weeks and extra *xiotalh* can be derived out of exceptional situations such as drought or epidemics.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, there are years when there is little time for everyday matters, or these can conflict with ceremonial responsibilities. For instance, when the current *jix oo'dagim* from Santa María de Ocotán was around 16 years old, the courthouse officers had difficulty finding him to celebrate a *xiotalh*. At the time, he had gone to the Pacific coast with his friends to look for a job. The officers sent a delegation to look for him, and bring him back to Juktir, to celebrate the ceremony. While many elders complained about him being irresponsible, many others blamed the courthouse officers for their lack of economic support for the young ceremonial leader. Furthermore, in 2012, a Cora healer who attended the young *jix oo'dagim* informed him that his recurrent illness was because he needed to become a healer as well, and begin the initiation process as soon as possible, a situation that would no doubt bring more responsibilities.

Once the healers reveal the newcomer's name, they start their formal initiation through a similar process to that followed by the healer novices going on retreat (Chapter 3). The new *xiotalh* leaders hold the respective abstinences over five weeks or more, isolating themselves in the correspondent *xiotalh* patio with their relatives (at the kinship level) or with the courthouse officers (at the communal level). In addition to the other *xiotalh* leaders, during the retreats there must be a *makgim* or a group of these present to direct the ceremony.<sup>192</sup> In both cases, at kinship level and community level, it is expected that many

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<sup>190</sup> Moreover, it is important to notice that Saint Michael, the Morning Star, appears in many accounts as a boy who grows up rapidly, and becomes a skilful hunter (Benítez 1980: 120-125; Reyes 2006a: 239).

<sup>191</sup> There were special *xiotalh* celebrated in the Mexicanero-Tepehuan village of San Pedro Jícoras when the USA conducted military operations in Iraq in the 1990s (Alvarado 1996: 104), praying that the war would not reach them. There was a similar situation in Sana María de Ocotán in 2003 during the invasion of Afghanistan.

<sup>192</sup> Normally a single *makgim* is enough for performing this ceremony on kinship patios. However, in the communal *xiotalh*, given its greater importance, two to five *makgim* are expected.

people will be gathered to accompany the newcomers in the retreat, as too few attendees will impede the conduct or the success of retreat.

The number of retreats in such cases is determined by the number of days each ceremonial centre devotes to the ceremony, which in turn is related to the particular tutelary deities worshipped in each *xiotalh* (Chapter 1). Consequently, if the *xiotalh* patio is devoted to Oikam, they will conduct three retreats in three different years (not necessarily consecutive); if the ceremonial centre is devoted to Mobatak, they will conduct five retreats. In the communal patios where people worship the Jich Oo' Our Father and Jich Oo' Our Mother (Reyes 2010b: 284) or the Bha'aa', the golden eagle, they have to conduct five retreats.

During the retreats, the novices fashion their sets of feathered sticks and they practice their skills daily to *dar parte*, praying 'the dispatch'. These arrows impersonate at the same time the particular *xiotalh* leaders themselves, as well as the ancestor they represent in the ceremonial centre. Thus, minimally, the *xiotalh* leaders have a set of three feathered sticks: the one that is themselves (the *kiiikam*, the *umuagim* or the *tua'dam*), and a pair of *noonob* or 'hands'. Nevertheless, many leaders are also *mamkagim*, and it is common that they display all their ceremonial sticks together during the *xiotalh*. During the praying sessions, it is possible to appreciate the *xiotalh* leader holding a pipe in the right hand, a pair of *noonob* in the left, and their correspondent and impersonating arrow stuck in front of them in an agave leaf or in the ground.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> It is possible for a novice *xiotalh* leader, who has been initiated as a healer first, to perform the *xiotalh* with the *noonob* used while healing. However, it has to be a temporary situation, otherwise this individual will never be able to fully lead the correspondent prayers, and will have to constantly excuse himself to the gods, while pronouncing them, not to mention that this person remains in danger of illness and death.



**Image 33 The *xiotalh* leaders holding the *noonob***

Learning ‘the dispatch’ is a skill that regular assistants to kinship *xiotalh* are familiar with, since the ceremonial leaders generally pray aloud and there is no restriction on participants listening. Consequently, it is common that adults have a minimal knowledge of these prayers, not only because they frequently hear them, but also because they are similar to *la confesión*, the prayer that every *xiotalh* participant pronounces every day during the ceremony. A man in Kauxbilhim told me once that the confession is something people must know very well since it is the basis for all other prayers. For example those prayers pronounced asking for the help of the healer, or when the healer asks for the god’s favours in turn. Nevertheless, even if the newcomer knows how to *dar parte* well, he or she will not be allowed (in the case of the *kïikam*) to lead the prayer until he or she has completed the prescribed number of retreats. In many *xiotalh* the opening prayer is responsorial between the *kïikam* and the *umuagim*; thus, when a new *kïikam* is still in the process of initiation, he is not allowed to

lead the prayer, regardless of how well he knows it. This situation is also reported during the prayer apologizing to the deities by one of the leaders. This is an example I registered on the Oikam patio where the *umuagim* reports the reason why the new *kikam*, 'his nephew', is not leading the prayers to the deities:

O'dam	English
dhiñ jikulh na ya kia'pix ya pui' tu juanim	my nephew just started working here
peru gu' bhai bapup xi chu da'ngi	but he is already taking [the responsibility]
ja'xgi mas na gu' ya' nombrarix	it does not matter, because he is designated here

#### (Appendix 1)

The situation is different when the new *xiotalh* leaders are children and their experience in such matters is still brief. In any case, the three or more leaders pray at the same time, at least two or three times a day, setting the appropriate learning situation for the newcomers, as a way of a *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave and Wenger 1991).<sup>194</sup>

#### THE XIOTALH LEADERS' PRACTICE

Oratory is the *xiotalh* leaders' most important practice as intermediaries between humans and deities. To this end, these speakers render an ordinary situation into a ritual situation by setting the conditions for the interaction between humans and gods. Through the action of *dar parte*, the ceremonial leaders temporalize 'timeless features', as Hanks (2000: 227) points out in the case of Maya shamans. This implies the transposition of two temporal dimensions, the present, and the distant past, the transpositions of 'structures into a diachronic stream of performance' (Hanks 2000: 227). In this regard it is important to highlight that the *xiotalh* or *mitote* patios, and their equivalent ceremonial centres in the Gran Nayar area, are representations of the world

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<sup>194</sup> Lave and Wenger (1991: 29) define this process as 'a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers and about activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice'.

(Guzmán 2000; Neurath 2002: 81-84; Preuss 1998 [1911]: 403-419; Reyes 2006a: 70; Valdovinos 2010: 254); not ‘any world’ but the primordial world in different stages. Consequently, the actions executed in the *nii’kartam* or *xiotalh* patios correspond to the god’s actions over the whole world. As briefly described in Chapter 1, these ceremonial centres are outdoor circular or quasi-circular plazas located in the middle of the forest. They are a *reduced model* of the world (Lévi-Strauss 1964: 44). Their most important ‘points’ are: the centre, with the fire representing the sun; the edge of the world, normally delimited with stones representing those ancestors which did not complete the initiation as gods (Cf. Valdovinos 2010: 254); the cardinal gives directions (very often to buildings) where the gods dwell (Cf. Preuss 1998 [1911]: 408), particularly the eastern side where the altar stands. In the communal patio in Juktir, the ‘seat of the twelve first ancestors’, where by the courthouse officers sit, is also well defined around the fire (Reyes 2006a: 80), as Preuss (1998 [1911]: 403-419) similarly observed for the Cora case.

While the ceremonial space displays in its settings many significant, timeless features, and the ceremonial leaders reinforce these transpositions by ‘bringing the past into the present’ (Hanks 2000: 237) in their prayers, in this case with the O’dam-Spanish expression ‘*janoo’ aquellos tiempos*’, ‘that day, in those times’:

O’dam	English
<i>porque</i> na pich gu chi’ ap ya oilhimik	because you [God] were here [in this world]
<i>janoo’ de aquellos tiempos</i>	that day, in those times
<i>cuando amaneció el día</i>	when the sun rose
na pich ya pui’ tu lijiruk	that you choose here
ya’ pui’ chu nombraruk	you named it
ya’ pich mo poneru gu kikam jich chat	you designated here the <i>kikam</i> our father

(Appendix 1)

Furthermore, through the action of ‘ritual condensation’ the *xiotalh* leaders (as well as the healers) turn themselves into ‘complex enunciators’ (Cf. Severi

2002: 34), investing themselves with the capacity to interact with different beings given their accumulation of many –and even contradictory – identities.<sup>195</sup> The interlocution capacity of this complex identity is enhanced by the role of the pipe and the tobacco during these acts. As mentioned before, while praying, the *xiotalh* leaders hold in one hand a lit tobacco pipe, which they smoke at the beginning and at the end of prayers. Tobacco is itself an ancestor, characterised as a messenger, capable of transporting messages from humans to deities, it is ‘the sacred mail’ (Conclusion Part I).

Oratory is no doubt one of the most relevant attributes of ceremonial leaders. However, this is not the only action they conduct, and their speeches have to be placed in the context of the *xiotalh* celebration and other ritual actions. *Xiotalh* ceremonies last between three and five days, depending on each kinship group’s tradition, but as a rule communal *xiotalh* are five days long (Chapter 1). Before the formal beginning, it is the responsibility of the *umuagim* to spread the word about the nearby *xiotalh* celebration, and to that end, he goes to the different villages inviting the people to attend, as described in the story of the gecko to which I referred earlier. At the communal level he has the support of the *jix kai’* (governor) in this duty, as the latter sends messages all around the community regarding this event and calling the people to participate. They also use the services of the local radio stations (Chapter 5). One day prior to the celebration, the *xiotalh* leaders clean and sweep the patio, as mentioned in their prayers. That evening the *umuagim* shows where the bonfire will be uncovering the squared fencing, constructed with logs, that protects the fireplace from animals. He puts new firewood down, arranging the logs concentrically by pointing each in a cardinal direction (going counter-clockwise starting with the east), and again in the gaps between creating a dense bonfire. He then lights the fire, a moment known as *jirdaika*.

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<sup>195</sup> Severi (2002) exemplifies ‘ritual condensation’ in describing how Kuna shamans portray a ‘complex image’ through the accumulation of ‘contradictory identities’ displayed by linguistic parallelisms in their prayers, making themselves capable of lending their voices to different invisible beings.





**Image 34 Central bonfire in the communal *xiotalh* patio at Kauxbilhim**

After sunset all the men gather around the fire and the *xiotalh* formally starts with a prayer. This moment is conducted in a slightly different way in each ceremonial centre. In the communal patio in Juktir, only the *xiotalh* leaders and the thirteen courthouse officers sit immediately around the fire, with the rest of the men around them in a concentric circle. The *jix oo'dagim* and the *umuagim* place themselves on the western side, facing eastwards, with the former on the left of the latter who is in turn on the left the *jix kai'*, the governor. In the communal patio in Chianarkam they place themselves in a south-north line, facing the east, and the *jix oo'dagim* places himself between the *jix kai'* (on his right) and the captain (on his left) (Chapter 5). At this moment, all the women are sitting on the ground at the northeast corner of the patio, led by the *tua'dam*. In Santa María de Ocotán the *xiotalh* formally begins when the governor or someone on his behalf says "*valgate Dios*", 'God take it into account', and starts reciting the prayer known as the *confession* (Chapter 5) loudly. In Santiago Teneraca the *Jix oo'dagim* starts this prayer, while in kinship patios this duty falls to the *kikam*.

After sunrise the next morning, on the first day of the ceremony, the *umuagim* sets up the *bopto'* or altar on the eastern side of the patio. This is a rectangular platform erected by embedding four forked wooden posts into the

ground ('y' shaped wooden posts), which support two crossbeams (east-west); these in turn support five transversal planks, one next to the other forming the surface of the altar, orientated on an east-west axis. They place these planks in a strict order from the western edge to the eastern edge of the altar. They correspond to the five steps or stages the sun and other deities go through on their pathway to heaven.<sup>196</sup> During the *xiotalh* celebrated prior to the rainy season, the altar has an additional arch of flowered tree branches over the front side. These platforms differ in size from one *xiotalh* to another, but they are normally slightly higher than an average O'dam person. The biggest one I have registered is the one on the Juktir *xiotalh* patio, which is approximately 2m high.



**Image 35 *Xiotalh* altar in Juktir**

These 'preliminary activities' are more than just preparations for the ceremony and constitute rather the first arrangements of both the ceremonial centre and the world, as alluded to in the prayers of the *xiotalh* leaders with reference to the activities of the ancestors and themselves:

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<sup>196</sup> In the equivalent Huichol ceremonial centres, there are pyramidal temples on the eastern side with stairs corresponding to the pathway of the sun from the underworld to the zenith (Neurath 2002: 206).

O'dam	English
<i>esos los tres personas</i>	those three people
<i>las tres señaladas</i>	the three designated
na mit pui' chi kim'pi	they cleansed in this way <sup>197</sup>
pui' chu u'xpigak	[incomprehensible]
pui' boxkar ma' ji dhagit	taking the broom in this way
dhi gook, dhi baik	these two, these three
na jir baik oi'ñdha, man ja titnora' mit ba'	those are three years [incomprehensible]
poneruk dhi gook, dhi baik, dhi makob	they put these two, these three, these four
ma'n ja gaikam, gook ja gagaikam	one beam, two beams
dhi ma'n ja ta'mla, gook ja ta'mla	one of its planks, two of the planks
baik ja ta'mla	three of the planks
no' ba' gu silhkam bhai'pui'poneruk ja mit na mit pui' chi isak	If that is the truth, they put it there, they stuck them there

#### (Appendix 1)

Once the *umuagim* sets up the altar, the *xiotalh* leaders place their set of arrows into agave leaves (or *pitayo* [*Stenocereus queretaroensis*] in Chianarkam) under the platform's western edge. The east and south directions are highly masculine, while the west and the north are female spaces. Respecting this principle, the leaders put their ritual objects from south to north in the following order: *kikam*, *umuagim*, and *tua'dam*. At Juktir's communal patio, with five ceremonial leaders (as I documented in 1998), the order from south to north was: the *jix oo'dagim*, the *umuagim*; the *mamadam gu mai*, the *tua'dam*, and the other *tua'dam* (Reyes 2006a: 102).<sup>198</sup>

One of the male leaders places a pot containing 'blessed water' (from a sacred spring) on the altar, which remains there until the end of the ceremony. Following this, in communal patios, one of the male leaders collects the

<sup>197</sup> This means the 'they cleanse themselves' as well.

<sup>198</sup> It is important to highlight the 'intermediary' position of the *mamadam gu mai* or the *umuagim* between the *kikam* and the *tua'dam*. During the ceremony in Juktir prior to the rainy season, these leaders use a *mattur* (grinder) in order to smash the roasted agave (Reyes 2006a: 142). This is otherwise a female tool used to grind the corn for making tortillas.

ribboned wooden staffs (*varas de mando*) from the courthouse officers. He washes them with blessed water, and hangs them from the front of the altar.<sup>199</sup> Taking the staffs from the courthouse officers openly sets and exhibits the hierarchies existing between them and the *xiotalh* leaders, placing the latter in a superior position; it also establishes the character of the wooden staffs, which will remain at the altar alongside with the leader's feathered sticks, all of which embody ancestors and are the recipients of prayers and offerings.

That morning the *xiotalh* leaders start receiving offerings to put on the top of the altar. These are items like: maize cobs, pumpkins, onions, *tuisap* (toasted ground corn flour), chocolate bars, and *maseca* (industrialised corn flour). The leaders alone have access to the top of the altar, and respecting the geographical arrangements, they place the men's offerings on the southern side and the women's offerings on the northern side. People deliver offerings every day during the ceremony until the morning of the last day, prior to the nocturnal dance.

On the first morning of the ceremony, the male *xiotalh* leaders fashion feathered sticks known as *iagit* and place them on each side of the altar. These impersonate the *xiotalh*'s tutelary deities, and are normally arranged in couples, with the male on the southern side and the female on the northern side, respectively becoming Our Father and Our Mother (Chapter 1). Every *xiotalh* participant contributes a set of feathers for the *iagit*. In Santa María de Ocotán, people attach three feathers for the male *ieget* and two for the female *iagit*, making a total of five (Reyes 2006a: 113). In general, the *ieget* are fashioned during the *xiotalh* prior to the rainy season, during the time of 'life's regeneration'. However, in Juktir's communal patio, the *xiotalh* leaders make *ieget* for each ceremony. Nevertheless, in the *tabagkam xiotalh* (prior to the rainy season) they tie cotton tassels to the tops, which are associated with 'life' and 'the rains' (Preuss 1998 [1906]: 142; Reyes 2006a: 197).

After placing the *ieget*, the *xiotalh* leaders pray 'the dispatch', *dar parte*, standing in front of the altar with pipes lit in the left hand and their *noonobs* in the right. They pray for about half an hour three times a day during the

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<sup>199</sup> The staffs have to be washed 'exactly like people do in order to participate in the ceremony' (Reyes 2006a: 103).

ceremony: in the morning after the sunrise, at noon, and in the afternoon before sunset. The *dispatch* is one of the main attributes and duties of the ceremonial leaders as interlocutors between humans and gods. Thus, through the performative act of their speeches, the leaders transmit their messages, displaying the relationship between themselves, the gods and the people present at the ceremony. These prayers invariably start by establishing the identity of the interlocutors and describing their scope of action on the world:

O'dam	English
<i>Compañero, ah! Dios</i> Jich Chat, Jich Ñan	My friend, ah! God Our Father, Our Mother
na bhamuu pai' kik San Pedro	Over there it is Saint Peter standing up
<i>Dios Santo Bandera Mexicana</i>	God sacred Mexican flag
na ji'k jir <i>templos</i>	many temples
na ji'k jir <i>villas</i>	many villages
na ji'k <i>ciudades</i>	many cities
na pui' tu'm jich escojer	that he chose us in this way
puich nii'ñ <i>todas las horas</i>	he sees in that way at any hour
<i>todos los días</i>	every day
<i>cada mañana</i>	every morning
ma'n kandhir	one candle
yoxii' ji dhagit, alhi'ch chikulat	a grasped flower, some chocolate
ji dhagit ma'nka'm	a person grasped
ji dhagit, <i>Santo Rosario</i>	a sacred Rosary grasped
un <i>Credo</i>	one Creed

**(Appendix 1)**

The omnipotent character of the deities is stressed by expressing that they 'see' over many places at any one time. Later, in this prayer, the orator enunciates other recipients of the prayer, which are identified as 'those for whom we have lit candles:

O'dam	English
bhan <i>cumplir</i> dhi jam fiestas	while we are delivering your festivities
dhi jam <i>pensiones</i> , señor Jesucristo	your pensions, Lord Jesus Christ
Jesús niño, Pedro San y María santísima y Santo Niño	Baby Jesus, Saint Peter and Holy Mary and Holy Baby [Jesus]
si yo soy Santiago Caballero	if I am Saint James the Knight
nam ji'k jir San Refugio	those who are Saint Refuge
nam ji'k jir San Miguel Arcangel	those who are Saint Michael Archangel
na mi'xim completaridha' dhi Madre Dolores	let the Mother of Sorrows be accomplished
Dios Santo	Bless God
dhi' ja'kbui nach mi' ja bi'ñxi'ñ gu kandhir	those for whom we have lit candles

(Appendix 1)

The *leaders* establish and reiterate their ancient role as intermediaries between the people and the deified ancestors, which was set a long time ago on 'that day, in those times':

O'dam	English
janoo' <i>de aquellos tiempos</i>	that day, in those times
<i>cuando amaneció el día</i>	when the day broke
<i>cuando amaneció</i>	when dawn set
Dhia' janoo' nat pui' chu xia'ñchudak ja mit	that day when they made the sun rise
na mit paidhuk ya' tu xia'ñchuda	when they made the sun rise here
Ya' mit bach dejaru O'dam mamran	here they left us their O'dam children
O'dam tibaña'n	the brought down O'dam [from heaven]
O'dam susbhiga'n, nach ba alh jup duiñchu'	O'dam [incomprehensible]
ach ja mit ba' ya' jich chut'tu	in this way they placed us here
nach ba' sap pu'ñi ja a'mkam ñiok da'	to speak on their behalf
dhi chu mamar	those your children
dhi chu tajañi	those [incomprehensible]
dhi suspulhi'ñ	those your blossoms
dhi yooxchuk y <i>todo</i> nam ji'k ya'p tu'i <i>presentes</i>	your flowers and all present here
nam ji'k ya' pai' pui' alh pu guguk am	those who once stood here

(Appendix 1)

The main messages the *xiotalh* leaders transmit through these prayers regard maize agriculture, and the general welfare of the kinship group (including absent individuals in the ceremony), their fields, their calves, as well as their protection against injurious agents:

O'dam	English
<i>ojala</i> ku gu' joidham pui'	hopefully in this nice way
cha'p juanat tu botpoda'	do not bother [us with] some worm
tuimi'x, tu' baisilh, babok, bix aixim	a corn-worm, neither a badger, a raccoon of any sort
tu' kaxio, gu tu' bhan bipi'kat	some fox, some coyote, first of all
pui' chu kumplir	it is delivered in this way

(Appendix 1)

O'dam	English
ba' pui' ba jam kaichu'n dhi ma'n ñi'ok	for this reason I make you hear this one word
dhi gook, dhi baik, dhi makob.	these two, these three, these four.
Noa' gu silhkam	Will it be the truth?
Nam ba'ch бага' los angeles temporales	That the angels already water us with storms
<i>los angeles, los angeles nos guarden</i>	the angels, the angels safeguard us
nam bhamidir pui' ba tu dasa'	that from there, they mandate it
dhix chamam ja sa'skalhik	their five mountain chains
dhix chamam ja oi'dha' ta'm	on their five mountains
gio dhix chamam bipia ta'm	and on their five springs
dhix chamam gæ'gær bipia ta'm	on the five great springs,
silhkam joidham jix abharum bhan pui' ba tum duña'	it truly will become very pretty
je nach ya' pui' ka xi chu joioi'ñ, dhi	and that here we are watching it
unos días o largo tiempo	some days, for a long time

(Appendix 1)

It is difficult to assess to what extent these prayers differ between the leaders of one *xiotalh* patio and another.<sup>200</sup> However, people agree that the former topics are regularly mentioned during the prayers, but that each *xiotalh* leader has his own style. People also recognize that the leaders mention issues related to the different moments of the ‘agro-ritual’ year. Therefore, in different *xiotalh* the orators emphasise, prior to the rainy season, the bringing of beneficial rains, or conversely, when the maize plants are already growing, petitions to the gods to control the hailstones.

During the *taabhakam xiotalh* (‘in the dry season’, celebrated between March and April) in Juktir, the fourth day of the celebration after *la confesión*, the male *xiotalh* leaders visit *Susbanta’m*, ‘the Toad’s Place’, accompanied by the courthouse officers as well as the men of the community who are willing to come. *Susbanta’m* is a rock shaped like a toad, located approximately 32km northeast of Juktir. In mythology, the toad is the ancestor responsible for a trick that brought the first rain to the world during the *xiotalh* (Benítez 1980: 144-146; Reyes 2006a: 240-242). Furthermore, it is possible to hear its constant, intense croak before the first rain of the season. Here, the courthouse officers deliver *tuisap* (toasted ground corn flour) offerings, spreading the powder over and around the rock. The *xiotalh* leaders address prayers to José Angel (his human name), asking him to bring benign and abundant rains from the heavens.<sup>201</sup>

Similarly, on the next and last days of the ceremony, they all visit and deliver offerings to a set of ancestors, which unlike the toad are agents injurious to the crops, and which dwell in the surrounds of Juktir (Reyes 2006a: 143-149): the badgers and racoons, the crows, the mice, the ice (or snow), and sickness. Mythology states they are too lazy or foolish to work in their fields and like to steal maize from humans (Chapter 1). At the three first places, the visitors spread *tuisap*; at The Ice Place they also deliver squashes, onions, *chilacayotes* (*Cucurbita ficifolia*), and *chayotes* (*Sechium edule*); at the Place of Sickness

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<sup>200</sup> It would be an enterprise that demanded access to different ceremonial centres as well as the ability to record and analyse the different prayers. However, it is important to point out that there are many similarities, in form and content, between the prayers I show here and their equivalents among the Mexicaneros as analysed by Alvarado (1996: 128-160).

<sup>201</sup> During my fieldwork registering the communal *xiotalh* in Juktir (1999-2001), I was told they did not go to this place now and they only went in the past (Reyes 2006a: 140). However, in 2005, the new governor revived this practice and they have been carrying it out ever since.



they only offer the skin of a dark (black or brown) goat as well as a stew made from the meat and bones. The *xiotalh* leaders address prayers to these injurious agents and kindly ask them in the name of the community, to take the offerings and not to damage the maize fields or people. During *tamog' kam xiotalh* (literally 'in the rainy season', celebrated in October) before the harvest, and later during the *xibkam oidha ta'm xiotalh* (literally the 'New Year's *xiotalh*'), these offerings are exclusively delivered to The Ice place. To my knowledge, there is no such action in the communal *xiotalh* in Chianarkam. However, the *jix oo'dagim* addresses these entities every day during his prayers. In Kauxbilhim, during the communal ceremony celebrated in June, the *capitán* and the *sargento* deliver *tuisap* to twelve places in the surrounding area (I have only registered eleven of them). These are: Babokta'm (Racoon's Place), Uakta'm (The Hawk's Place), Xixio' dada' (unknown meaning), Titmocar ta'm (unknown meaning), Xiu'lhdkakar (unknown meaning), Kaxio ta'm (Fox's Place), Babok (Racoon), Basik ta'm (Mouse's Place), Jotkoxcha'm ta'm (Onion's Place), Bho'mkoxcha'm (The Grey Squirrel's Place), Jir Karax cha'm (unknown meaning). Furthermore, the *jix oo'dagim* goes alone to deliver offerings to another set of places, namely: Jibilh (unknown meaning), Kib (The Ice or Snow's Place), Babok (Racoon's Place), Chu'ulh tuk (The Chu'ulh's Place)<sup>202</sup>, Yooxi [missing word] (Place of [unknown] flowers), Yooxi jurnip kam (Place of Western Flowers), Kokda' jurnip kam (Place of Western Sickness), and the Kookda' (Sickness Place). These accounted activities correspond mainly to the male *xiotalh* leaders. Most of the time, the *tua'dam* and other women work in the *xiotalh*'s kitchen preparing the ceremonial meals, whose main recipients are the deified ancestors (Chapter 1).

The last night of the ceremony is the night of the dance. Before the humans perform, it is the turn of the gods, because: 'this is the festival of the gods, so they dance first' (*kikam* Cesareo Morales). Thus, the first dancers are the *iagit* as the impersonators of the deities. In Juktir, at noon on the fourth day

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<sup>202</sup> Chu'ulh is a mythological character associated with wild telluric forces of earth. This accounts often portray Chu'ulh as an old woman with the capacity to transform (into a young woman or man) who eats children and unfaithful couples. Stories state that the O'dam only managed to get rid of Chu'ulh when they tricked her during a *xiotalh*, by giving her a poisoned beverage to drink and burning her in the scared fire. Then she exploded and her body was spread on the landscape, where, for instance, the stones are her liver (Hobgood 1970; Hobgood and Riley 1981).

of the ceremony and when all the participants have attached their set of feathers, the *jix oo'dagim* takes the *ieget* from the altar and stands before the central fire facing eastwards and holding one in each hand. He raises both sticks over his head parallel to the floor, so the feathers hang downwards. The participants form two parallel lines, with the men (on the southern side) and the women (on the northern side). They move counter-clockwise around the *jix oo'dagim* and the fire, walking in concentric circles. The men start the march closer to the centre, while the women go around the outside, closer to the altar. After five rounds and touching the top of their heads with the feathers, they return to their original positions in two separated lines before the altar. The *jix oo'dagim* puts the *iagit* back on the platform, but this time the *iagit* is attached to the rear legs, as a sign of the gods moving towards heaven. In other *xiotalh* the ceremonial leaders conduct these actions at night, right before the humans' dance

In kinship *xiotalh*, the *ieget* dance after the musical bow and the gourd (the exact order of these events can vary), which celebrate the festival too. The *umuagim* takes both instruments from under the altar and carries them counter-clockwise around the fire. After each round of five, he stops in front of the altar and behind the fire, facing eastwards and presents the instruments to the gods in by raising them in his hands twice. Then the *umuagim* or the *sokbolh* plays the bow for five or ten minutes in order to tune it and to complete the dance for the deities.

The *xiotalh* leaders prepare themselves for the dance by standing in front of their respective side of the altar (*kikam*-north and *tua'dam*-south) and call the other participants to take their places behind.<sup>203</sup> Then the *xiotalh* leaders direct the dance from the front of the lines to orient their trajectory and give directions for the steps.<sup>204</sup> The first steps are linear, forward and backwards on the east-

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<sup>203</sup> In kinship *xiotalh* during the ceremony prior to the rainy season, before the dance the leaders conduct the ceremony by drinking *mezcal* (distilled century-plant liquor) for those young individuals in the process of becoming adults (Chapter 1).

<sup>204</sup> On the communal patio in Juktir, they start performing dance revolutions by carrying out the flags of the *xiotalh*, which they pick up five times at different moments during the night at the beginning of the five stages of the *xiotalh*. (Reyes 2006a: 135). At the harvest festival they also 'dance the corn' by carrying out maize plants (Chapter 1).

west axis. Arranged in pairs holding hands, the participants walk backwards towards the west. Then the musician hits the bowstring three times and the people move forward using three pronounced well-marked dance steps (Chapter 1). This repeated five or so times (depending on each particular case, and the two lines dance around the fire in concentric circles and in opposite directions. The men are closer to the fire, counter-clockwise, while the women dance clockwise around them. After five or ten rounds, the women take the same direction as the men and they dance like this for the rest of the night. After the first rounds, the *xiotalh* leaders can leave the formation if they want, but they will return once again, to begin each of the five dance rounds during the night. In kinship *xiotalh*, depending on each patio tradition, they stop the dance at some point during the night to conduct the rituals for the children who are moving onto a different stage in life (Chapter 1). In the morning, the dance ends with the execution of linear movements as at the beginning. Facing eastwards, the dance finishes at sunrise, the moment when the *xiotalh* leaders address a final prayer to the gods.

Once the dance finishes, at the communal level in Santa María de Ocotán and San Francisco de Ocotán, the *xiotalh* leaders as well as the courthouse officers lead a procession with all the *xiotalh* participants, to visit the church and to pay their respects to the gods there. In Santiago Teneraca the visit proceeds in the opposite direction, and a group of young men, arranged militarily in two lines, bring a painting of the Virgin de Guadalupe from the church to the *xiotalh* patio. After that, the ceremonial leaders return the wooden staffs and the authority to the courthouse officers.

To finish the ceremony one of the *xiotalh* leaders takes down a pot of water from the altar which is used to wash everyone in order to break the fast. To this end, the *kikam* sprays water on the *umuagim*'s face using a flower as a sprinkler. Then the latter or an elder repeats this on the other men. The *tua'dam* does the same among the women on the northern side of the patio (Reyes 2006a: 154; Cf. Sánchez 1980: 105).<sup>205</sup> Then the *xiotalh* leaders distribute the meals such as *timaitch* or other corn foodstuffs corresponding to the season

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205 Another way of doing this is by taking some water into the mouth and then strongly spraying it over the other person's face.

(Chapter 1), and *junma'n* (a mixture of deer or squirrel meat and maize soup) in kinship *xiotalh*, or beef stock in communal patios.

After the meal, the majority of the participants leave the ceremonial centre. The *xiotalh* leaders remain to clean the patio, putting back the ceremonial objects like the bow, the gourd and all the pieces from the altar, and remove ashes from the bonfire. In such *xiotalh* patios with permanent constructions like a kitchen, many items will be stored here. In other *xiotalh* patios, these objects are simply wrapped up and tied to the top of a tree, while the *kikam* takes the bow with him to his home.

## CONCLUSIONS

The *xiotalh* leaders are the enabled intermediaries between humans and the deified ancestors in the scope of agriculture, hunting, and the bright side of life. These specialists are ancestors themselves and, in that character, they are privileged interlocutors to speak with the deities on behalf of mankind. It was thanks to the self-sacrifice of the ancestors, in a primordially distant past, that they transformed themselves into gods, and life as we currently know it came into being. The character of the specialists as intermediaries is very much stressed in their prayers. In these speeches, the *xiotalh* leaders describe the gods' actions during the primordial *xiotalh*, which are at the same time their own during the *xiotalh* then being celebrated.

The ceremonial leaders and other ritual actors are the epitome of the gods associated with the planet Venus: the Morning Star and his alter ego the Evening Star (Cf. Neurath 2005c). In this regard, not only do the *xiotalh* leaders impersonate these deities during the *xiotalh*, but all the participants do as well. Scholars working in the Gran Nayar area have documented the simultaneous presence of many impersonators of these deities during the ceremonies, emphasizing their different characteristics (Cf. Neurath 2002: 227; Reyes 2006a: 88; Valdovinos 2010: 249-253). In this way, there are several representations of these gods in the *xiotalh* invested with their attributes: the different sets of arrows themselves, the ceremonial leaders, the governor, and

the captain (Chapter 5), the musician, and ultimately all the participants. These characters highlight some features of the cosmic twins, the Morning and Evening Stars, over others. Furthermore, these characters can simultaneously accumulate contradictory, mutually implicated identities, as is the case of the hunter and the prey, both accumulated in each *xiotalh* leader and their attributes, the arrows and feathers. The Morning Star in his role as the archer is clearly impersonated by the musician (bow player) in relation to his prey, the gigantic aquatic snake represented by the two lines of dancers performing around him (Reyes 2006a: 239).

Among these characters, the figure of the musician or *sokbolh* deserves a further comment since he has attributes as an intermediary between humans and gods, similar to the *xiotalh* leaders. Like the latter, he holds a specialized position in the ceremony, displaying skills that he has to learn and master over the time, and conducting ritual retreats like other ritual specialist do. His character as privileged intermediary is otherwise more explicitly recognized among the other indigenous people in the Gran Nayar area, given the lyrics of their songs. However, the O'dam (and the Mexicanero) bow players contrast dramatically with their equivalents among the Huichol and the Cora. In Huichol ceremonies, for example, the songs are specialized mythological texts through which the singer explains the word's origins and engages in dialogues with the deities (Lira 2014: 211; Neurath 2002: 250-252; Preuss 1998: 389). In the Cora *mitote*, the songs contain long texts as well, and the singer orients the participants' actions through his words, which the dancers take as an authorized voice assuming that they are the god's own indications (Valdovinos 2010: 261).<sup>206</sup>

In contrast, the O'dam *xiotalh* songs stand out in the regional context because of their relative lack of words (Reyes 2006a: 218-225). Consequently, it is not possible to base our argument on an analysis of the content of these

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<sup>206</sup> This author attributes a 'shamanic' character to the singer given his power as a privileged interlocutor with deities (Valdovinos 2008: 223). Attributing the god's voice to the singer is a phenomenon widespread in north Mexico and in the southwest United States. The Yaqui case studied by Evers and Molina (1987) is well-documented. The Yaqui deer songs tell the life story of 'the little brother deer'. During the singers' performance, 'their water drum is said to represent his heartbeat, their rasps his breathing, their words his voice. Through their songs he becomes the real deer person' (Evers and Molina 1987: 73).

songs, or even take this as our starting point, given that these songs do not say very much or because we do not understand what they say. Therefore, we must consider other aspects of the *sokbolh*'s characteristics and performance in order to understand his role as intermediary. As mentioned earlier, the participants in the *xiotalh* state that these ceremonies are the festivals of the gods. The gods dance as humans do, especially in the celebration prior to the rainy season when the ceremonial leaders carry the tutelary deities, in the form of feathered sticks, around the patio. The *sokbolh*'s execution frames the dances of both the deities and humans. This fact itself places the musician between both sets of participants. Concerning the songs themselves, besides the brief phrases the *sokbolh* utters from time to time, they very much resemble those intonations, also wordless, that the healers sing during the souls' banishment ceremony (Chapter 6). To our current knowledge, these are the only healing situations that require the *mamkagim* to sing, a practice that is otherwise very common in Huichol healings (Pacheco 2013). These songs that the healers perform have, without doubt, an intermediary role between humans, the gods and the spirits of the dead. What kind of message they convey, however, remains to be established.

## Chapter 5

### Becoming ancestors: the courthouse officers, the community and the State

#### INTRODUCTION

Recently in *la sierra* dozens of O'dam people had reported multiple apparitions of 'the gods'. The first time I heard of these events was in November 2009, when I was working for the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) on the restoration of the local ancient 'traditional' church in Kauxbilhim. One evening I arrived with building materials from Durango City and found the *jix kai'*, who unable to hide his concern, was waiting for me with a letter in his hands. He had received it two days earlier from the *anexo*<sup>207</sup> Los Alacranes and it said:<sup>208</sup>

Los Alacranes, Mezquital Durango

15<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Subject: Information

This letter addresses you as authorities in the community of San Francisco de Ocotán.

What follows is what happened:

We inform you all that in *anexo* Los Alacranes a boy of around six years old appeared wearing white clothes, a *soyate* hat, and cowhide sandals. The boy appeared in the house of Mr. Juan Flores Soto, 20 metres from where he found his thirteen year old daughter Ofelia Flores Santana. This happened on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> of November at about 4 in the afternoon and he said these words:

All the students in the *telesecundaria*, should be healed by a healer because they are ill. Otherwise something is going to happen to them. And as for the teachers, they know what is going to happen.

Regarding the church; it is not right that outsiders are demolishing it, because this church was built by people from our own community. Because of what they are doing, something is coming, something is going to happen, to my own people.

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<sup>207</sup> Territorial sub-divisions of the communities.

<sup>208</sup> I keep a copy of this letter in my personal files. This is my translation from Spanish.

The men have to wear white clothes, *soyate* hats and cowhide sandals; and women are also going to wear their [traditional] dress.

Finally, at the place where he appeared, he left five corn cobs standing upright on a gourd.

This is all that I have to inform you of and I attach the list if witnesses.

Best wishes

[Signatures and stamps]

Feliciano Flores Soto

Head of Station

Adelaido Cervantes Flores

Second Head of Station

From then on, similar phenomena have been repeatedly reported at least up until 2013, mainly in the vicinity of San Francisco de Ocotán and its *anexos*. In general, the message to the O'dam was clear: they had to stop drinking alcohol (especially beer); they must wear traditional clothes; cowhide sandals (not rubber); the men were to wear *soyate* hats and the women long colourful dresses, smocks and sandals; as well as to respect *el costumbre*.<sup>209</sup> Given the context of drug trafficking, the severe and violent incursion of drug cartels, the Mexican army and the police, not to mention myself intervening with the church, and a severe drought which affected north Mexico between 2010 and 2011, this phenomena refers to the tense and constantly ambiguous relationship between the O'dam and the mestizo world (I will return to the apparitions of the gods in the last section in this chapter).

The so-call *gobierno tradicional*, traditional government, which the letter refers to as the 'authorities in this community', is in charge of delivering justice and is responsible for Mexican and O'dam law enforcement. However, Mexican law does not recognise such authorities. This group of traditional authorities and the agrarian authorities (the latter supported by the agrarian law) share communal jurisdiction. In this chapter I describe the role of *gobiernos tradicionales* and the agrarian authorities as mediators of relationships between the community and a wide sphere of 'alterity' which includes the deified ancestors and the mestizo world especially as embodied by the Mexican

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<sup>209</sup> With '*el costumbre*' the O'dam mainly refers to *xiotalh* ceremonies making a distinction from the *fiestas*, the church festivals. Nevertheless it is very common that people allude to both types of celebration as *el costumbre*, as well as retreats and healing sessions.



State.<sup>210</sup> With this in mind, this chapter discusses the election process of these authorities, their structure and internal organisation, their performance at the courthouse as the deliverers of justice, their leading role in public ceremonialism, and the tense and always potentially conflictual relationship between the 'traditional'<sup>211</sup> and the agrarian authorities.

Even though the Mexican state do not recognised *ipso jure* the courthouse officers, there is a tacit agreement with municipalities and the states of Durango and Nayarit which recognizes their authority and delegates to them certain functions such as justices of the peace and the local police. They are responsible for: judging in local trials and organizing the communal works for villages such as repairs, improvements or digging graves for the deceased (Reyes 2010b: 55, 80; Sánchez 1980: 90). They lead and promote the right observances during festivals at the church-courthouse and ceremonies in the communal *xiotalh* patio. Moreover, they are intermediaries between the whole community and non-human entities such as the gods or communal ancestors, other communities, and the Mexican state. The responsibility for the success or failure of these activities rests with them, and people judge them based on their leadership.

The courthouse officers are themselves people in the process of becoming communal ancestors. Its head, 'the governor', known in O'dam as the *jix kai'*, reproduces the life of Jix kai' chio'ñ,<sup>212</sup> the Morning Star, when he was on his own journey to becoming a deified ancestor. At this stage of his life, Jix kai' chio'ñ, sometimes referred to as Miguel (alluding to the Archangel Michael), went around the world, accomplishing great things such as world peace by suppressing or domesticating wild forces like the snow and mosquito women (Benítez 1980: 140; Hobgood 1970), and he established *el costumbre* by founding the *xiotalh*.<sup>213</sup> In contrast, although agrarian authorities have a more

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<sup>210</sup> In this regard I have a different perspective from that supported by Cramaussel (2013), who excludes the 'recently introduced' Agrarian Authorities, from her study of *El sistema de cargos en San Bernardino de Milpilllas Chico*.

<sup>211</sup> I use here 'traditional' in the same way as the O'dam, to emphasise their indigenous old origin of this set of authorities and to differentiate them from those belonging to the Mexican State.

<sup>212</sup> The 'ruling man' (Hobgood 1970: 401) or 'the man who listens' (Ambriz and Gurrola 2013b: 17).

<sup>213</sup> Also Chapter 4 about the *xiotalh*'s musician.

delimited scope of action, they can achieve superior economic and political power due to their relations with the timber industry, and because the terms of their charge are longer than those held by the courthouse authorities.

#### THE GOBIERNO TRADICIONAL, STRUCTURE AND ELECTION

For a long time the discussion about the *sistemas de cargos* and the *mayordomías* focused on their possible pre-Hispanic or colonial origin (Cf. Chance and Taylor 1985). However, Jáuregui et al. (2003) have demonstrated that in the Gran Nayar area these cargos need to be approached as part of the whole cargo system, including those from the *mitote* patio –otherwise ignored by many academics who have focused on the Mesoamerican area- with a clear pre-Hispanic origin.<sup>214</sup> Therefore, it is more relevant to understand how these Hispanic institutions have been adopted and developed in Mexico by the indigenous population (Jáuregui et al. 2003: 124) than to acknowledge their possible historical origin.

Although there is no doubt that the O'dam courthouse officers have Spanish names corresponding to the *cabildo*, the council (Chance and Taylor 1985: 14-17), we cannot ignore the association between the *jix kai'* and Jix kai' chio'ñ, the *xiotalh's* founder (Reyes 2006a: 87; 2010b: 20).<sup>215</sup> Beyond their nominal designation, their authority is founded in a social pact which is attributed to the ancestors they represent. Their authority is based on the 'ancestors authority' (Jáuregui et al. 2003; Reyes 2009b) from a primordial community integrated by the original sierra inhabitants, as it is expressed in many mythological accounts. For instance, in a story from Juktir, it states that: 'animals who are governors assembled, the wolf, the mountain lion, the bear,

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<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, even in places in southern Mexico, where these ceremonial centres with a clear pre-Hispanic origin are absent, the cult in church can have many *cargos* fulfilling ceremonial duties which exceed those considered as merely Catholic or Hispanic (Jáuregui et al. 2003: 122; Cf. Liffman 2011: 57).

<sup>215</sup> Sánchez (1980: 96) noticed there was a relation between this deity and Saint Michael (Chapter 5). Nevertheless, he did not recognize the associations O'dam people make between the governor, the cultural hero, and the Christian deity, and said that 'the Tepehuan are confused about their identity'.

the coyote, and the fox’ (Reyes 2006a: 84) and these are the main predators of *la sierra*.<sup>216</sup>

In Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle and in Santiago Teneraca, the *gobierno tradicional* has thirteen positions that in turn are arranged in three subsets of *cargos*, which I call: the ‘proper government’, the military authorities, and the church officers. In San Francisco de Ocotán, there are four positions in the ‘proper government’ and two in the church. In this case there are four military authorities, which differ from the two other cases, and are affiliated with the *xiotalh* patio. All these cargo officers are under the authority of *jix kai’* –except for the military authorities in San Francisco de Ocotán – but each subset has its own head and they are in charge of their own scope of action. There are slight differences in the names between the three communities, which are displayed in the following tables.<sup>217</sup>

Proper Government	Military Authorities	Church Authorities
Gobernador Primero, Jix kai’, First Governor	Capitán, Kapchin, Captain	Fiscal, Pixkalh, Sacristan
Gobernador Segundo, Second Governor	Sargento, Sargent	Tupil, Assistant
Alcalde Mayor, First Mayor	Cabo, Corporal	
Alcalde Segundo, Second Mayor	Guerra, War	
Alguacil Mayor, Orocil Primero First Bailiff	Alferez, Lieutenant	
Alguacil Segundo, Orocil Segundo, Second Bailiff		

**Table 7 Traditional Government Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle**

<sup>216</sup> As Viveiros de Castro (1998: 471; 2013: 421) points out in the case of Amazonian cosmologies, ‘the emphasis seems to be on those species which perform a key symbolic and practical role such as the great predators and the principal species of prey for humans’.

<sup>217</sup> I provide the names in Spanish first, since these names have, in principal a Spanish origin. In those cases where O’dam people have developed a common linguistic adaptation, I provide the name in O’dam. Finally, I provide the possible translation into English. The O’dam name *jix kai’* is an exception in that it is not an adaptation of Spanish, but the assimilation of two different categories. For this reason, in what follows, I use the Spanish names with the exception of the *jix kai’*, where I use the Spanish and the O’dam form.

Proper Government	Military Authorities	Church Authorities
Gobernador Primero, Jix kai', First Governor	Capitán, Kapchin, Captain	Fiscal, Pixkalh, Sacristan
Gobernador Segundo, Second Governor	Sargento, Sargent	Tupil, Assistant
Regidor, Councilor	Cabo, Corporal	
Alguacil Primero, Orocil Primero, First Bailiff	Guerra, War	
Alguacil Segundo, Orocil Segundo, Second Bailiff	Alferez, Lieutenant	
	Cajero, <i>Kajer</i> , Drumer	

**Table 8 Traditional Government Santiago Teneraca**

Proper Government	Military Authorities Affiliated to the Xiotalh Patio	Church Authorities
Gobernador Primeror, Jix kai', First Governor	Capitán, Kapchin, Captain	Fiscal, Pixkalh, Sacristan
Gobernador Segundo or Alcalde, Second Governor	Sargento, Sargent	Tupil, Assistant
Alguacil Mayor, Orocil Mayor, First Bailiff	Cabo, Corporal	
Alguacil Menor, Orocil Segundo, Second Bailiff	Guerra, War	

**Table 9 Traditional Government San Francisco de Ocotán**

The officers hold working meetings in the courthouse, locally known as the office or Casa Real, located in the *cabecera* or communal head in each community.<sup>218</sup> There are also smaller offices at each *anexo*, where a pair of local courthouse officers deal with everyday local issues. These are known as *jueces*, judges, or *jefes de cuartel*, Heads of Stations, which is in fact the position recognized by the municipality in relation to them and the governor.<sup>219</sup> All these positions are exclusively held by men. However, in recent years there have been women as *jefas de cuartel* in some *anexos* in Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle. All these authorities hold a ribboned wooden staff or *varas de mando* as their visible attribute. The ribbon colours can vary, but the

<sup>218</sup> *Cabeceras*, are the villages serving as sets and of the traditional governments at each community. They are administrative centres.

<sup>219</sup> Furthermore, people use the term *juez* or *jueces* (plural) to generically designate all the officers. Particularly in Santa María de Ocotán, the Alcalde Mayor is also known as *juez*. However, there are the *jix kai'* and the local *jueces* at each *anexo* who are recognized as such by the municipality in their roles as judges.

green, white, and red, as in the Mexican flag, are common, especially in the *gobernador primero*'s staff.



**Image 36 Ribbioned wooden staffs**

It is in the community of Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle where the O'dam have made more adaptations to match the *gobierno tradicional* roles in regard to their relationship with Mexican state. The most important is that exceptionally in this community, the officers have terms of three years in this endeavour instead of one, as is normal. For this reason, it is convenient to explain first how the O'dam from Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco de Ocotán choose their cargo officers every year in agreement with the annual ritual cycle, and then explain the differences with respect to Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle.

Many of the significant dates in the process of officer elections and change are important ceremonial dates in the church and *xiotalh*'s calendar also. In September, during the communal *xiotalh* in Chianarkam, the elder men hold the council. The elders, locally known as *los señores*, are those men who have previously held the rank of *capitán* or higher. They meet away from the rest of the participants in the *xiotalh*, and choose a prospective *gobernador*

*primero*. Appreciated attributes for this charge are responsibility, good relations with people, and that he does not drink or bicker very much. The *jix kai'* in charge has the right to suggest one individual as his successor, and the others must consider him.<sup>220</sup> Once the elders have chosen the *gobernador primero*, they discuss the lesser charges.

In Santiago Teneraca, the elders encourage young men and the men who live furthest away from the *cabecera*, to take the lower-ranked positions as a way of making them participate in communal life. All the courthouse officers must live in the *cabecera* during a year, which begins in early January, each year. Since they are very strict in this regard, often the new officers move house and bring their families with them. Those with children have to make arrangements to move them to the local school.

When the *xiotalh* is over, the courthouse officers gather as many people together as they can, and they visit those chosen in to tell them of their selection. People say it is preferable to do it at night to avoid being seen by the 'new ones', and as such they cannot run away. Once inside the prospective officer's house, the authorities give a formal speech asking them to accept the charge. The protocol indicates that those selected reject the proposal, so that the authorities insist and get their companion's support. This collective support and the insistence will be used later as an argument by the authorities when asking the *comuneros*, the community's members, for their help. They might say: 'you went to my house, asked me to be the authority, I rejected and you insisted on it. Then, I need your support now' (Reyes 2010b: 57).

During the celebration of *Santur tam* or *Santoro* (from Latin *Santorum*), on the first of November in the evening, the outgoing courthouse officers publicly introduce their successors in the courthouse. The first offer *mezcal* to the latter and 'encourage them' with a formal speech (Chapter 2). At the same time, the families get together at the cemetery to celebrate their deceased relatives by offering them food, drinks and music. It is common that the next morning, the incoming authorities still around are quite drunk given the beverages consumed in the courthouse.

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<sup>220</sup> I had been on the *xiotalh* patio twice by that time and there were no more than twenty men during the *cabildo* and there were no the elected candidates either.

On the first of January around 1am, the outgoing authorities go to the river to wash the staffs and renew their ribbons. Later in the morning all the outgoing and incoming authorities assemble in the courthouse for the 'handing over of the staffs' (Spanish: *cambio de varas*). One by one, starting with the new *jix kai*, the outgoing authorities, holding their staffs vertically in their hands, call their successors to the desk in front of them. The incoming authorities bow their heads in reverence to the staffs, first diagonally to the right and then diagonally to the left. The incoming officers make the sign of the cross with their right hand (the thumb and the index touch tips, while the three other fingers stand erect) and an elder asks if they are willing to receive the staffs. The new ones reply 'yes' and they each receive their staff into their hands. After this, the community has new authorities, although still pending is the 'handing over of the crowns' (Chapter 2) to complete the transfer of responsibilities.

In San Francisco de Ocotán the situation is similar. During the communal *xiotalh* in October, the elders discuss those who would be good prospects for the new *gobernador primero*. To be eligible, the desirable profile is: to be responsible, to frequent the *xiotalh* and the festivals, to be a good speaker, to have been a good officer before, and to have demonstrated the capacity to follow ritual abstinences. After the elders talk about this privately, they discuss it openly with the rest of the *comuneros* during an assembly held on 5th of November, after the *Santur tam*. The council takes place in the courthouse and the *comuneros* give their opinions regarding the selection. Once the decision is communally agreed, the elders must convince those selected. This is a difficult task, and men try to avoid this position given the hard work and problems involved. Every evening for five days, the elders address those selected and offer *mezcal* (distilled century plant beverage). He will try to reject as much as he can. Once the *gobernador* accepts, the *comuneros* choose the other positions. This will be followed by five days of festivities with the dancers performing in the courthouse. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of December during the celebration of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the outgoing officers sacrifice a calf and offer food to the newcomers. On the first of January, the incoming officers receive the ribboned wooden staffs and from then on, they are the new authorities.

In Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle the situation is slightly different. Before 1980, the selection of the courthouse officers was via the consensus of the *comuneros* (Benítez 1980: 70; Cf. Sánchez 1980: 92), in a similar way to San Francisco de Ocotán. After 1980, the *comuneros* introduced a change to the election process as well as the terms of performance of the officers. This became an open election where every *comunero*, regardless of gender or age (as long as a child can walk even holding their parents hand), can participate. Furthermore, instead of being in charge of one year, officers hold authority for three years as with the municipal and the agrarian positions. Nowadays, political campaigns are undertaken and even though this is not official, external political parties invest money in such endeavours. In recent years, the idea of returning to the old system has been a recurrent topic during election periods. Many people openly discuss this, saying that the *gobernador* '*compra el sello*' currently 'buys the stamp',<sup>221</sup> which suggests it is clear that money plays a key role in the election process which is to the detriment of knowledge of O'dam traditions.

In Santa María de Ocotán there are two positions which are not triennially elected: local judges at each *anexo* who are elected annually; and the military authorities who can opt for three more years. With the exception of the military officers, the rest (in every community) have to stand down for a whole term before being selected again for a different position. Furthermore, those who have been elected once as *jix kai'* cannot be elected again for any position, although they retain the status of elders.

But even in this politicised schema, there are many formalities and an established calendar to follow. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, every three years, the *gobernador primero* sends messages to the *comuneros* from all the *anexos* to gather at the courthouse in Juktir on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, during the festival of the Virgin of the Nativity. After midday, the *jix kai'* calls out the list to verify which *anexos* are represented at the meeting. The *gobernador primero* and the *capitán* give a speech to remind the audience how important it is to be there on that day, encouraging them to make their proposals or to put themselves forward as candidates. At this stage it is normal to have six or eight interested

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<sup>221</sup> This refers to the stamp used by authorities on official documents.



candidates. In the forthcoming meeting, one of the main goals is to have negotiations with candidates resulting in a short list of ideally two candidates.<sup>222</sup>

In the last fifteen years, some *comuneros* have supported the idea of written rules for the election process. This has also been lobbied and promoted by the Mexican state, under the argument that communities must have clear legal regulations. As a result of such discussions, the *comuneros* from Santa María assume there is a minimal profile in order to run for a *gobernador primero*. The candidate should: be an O'dam speaker; know '*el costumbre*' (the O'dam tradition)<sup>223</sup> and local law; be Catholic; and know well the civil work involved in conflict resolution. It is said that it is no longer possible to lack one of these features (Reyes 2010b: 84).<sup>224</sup> A constant complaint from the elders and former authorities is that the authorities have become '*políticos*', politicians, that they promise much, and get on very well with outsiders but do not know *el costumbre*.

On the fourth of October, during the festival of Saint Francis, the *comuneros* meet again at the courthouse in order to formally register the candidates. After a couple of months of proselytising in all the villages, the candidates are up for election on 31<sup>st</sup> of December. On this day, in each *anexo* and in the *cabecera*, the people meet at a prearranged place to be counted. The supporters of each candidate stand in different lines where a delegate of each political group and the officers count every person there. By the evening, the results from each *anexo* are known and brought to the *cabecera* to be calculated. The *comuneros* only vote for the *gobernador primero* position and the candidate who obtains the second position becomes the *gobernador segundo*.

Every year at 1am on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, regardless of whether there was an election, the thirteen courthouse and church officers go to the river in Juktir.

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<sup>222</sup> Benítez (1980: 70), who visited Santa María de Ocotán in 1978, mentions that the governors (the 'first' and the 'second') were elected by the elders on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September and that this election was ratified the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

<sup>223</sup> This is socially sanctioned through the participation in public ceremonialism.

<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, this profile excludes many residents from San José de Xoconoxtle, where many of them have abandoned the use of the O'dam language. This is particularly relevant as from the 1940s the people from here and the surrounding vicinity are recognised as a different community (Reyes 2006a: 39).

There they undress and go into the water to wash the ribboned wooden staffs as in Chianarkam. In Juktir the temperature is considerably lower and the action demands courage from the staff holders. After submerging themselves five times, they get dressed and replace the old staff ribbons for a set of new ones. Latter at around noon, the ceremony for the handing over of the staffs is celebrated. Similar to my description of Santiago Teneraca, the new *gobernador primero*, and the new *gobernador segundo*, receive the ribboned wooden staff from an elder recognised for his experience, normally this is a former *gobernador primero*. After that, the assembly spontaneously proposes the rest of the charges except the *fiscal* and the *tupil* which have to be approved by the *mayordomos* at the church. Normally the election for the remaining officers is simple and they accept the responsibility and receive the staff. However, during the ceremony in 2008, many nominated men declined to accept the positions and the elders repeatedly 'encouraged them' by reminding them why it is so important for the community that they accept this responsibility.

Once the handing over of the staffs is concluded at the courthouse, all the *mayordomos* meet in the church forecourt to hear nominations for the *fiscal* and *tupil* positions. Normally the candidates are supported by, or are part of, the governors' group; consequently, there are at least two applicants. However, contrary to what happens in the governor's election, it is absolutely necessary that the candidates are familiar with the ritual job at church, which implies they have been previously involved in it, whether as *mayordomos* or fulfilling other responsibilities. Here, the current *mayordomos* of all festivals in the year make the decision. The winner becomes the *fiscal* and the loser becomes the *tupil*. At the church as in the courthouse, an elder man 'encourages' the new cargo officers.

In the afternoon, the thirteen outgoing and incoming *cargos* participate in the crowns and the sugar canes handing over ceremony in the same way, followed by the *mayordomos* (Chapter 2). At Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco de Ocotán, the crowns and canes handing over ceremony is celebrated on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. This festival is known in both places as the *Sasab cha'm*, or the music festival. In Chianarkam it is also called 'Our Mother's festival', and they celebrate, Our Mother of Sorrows, whose festival is in Juktir

the Friday prior to the Holy Week. This festival is similar to other patron saint celebrations sponsored by the *mayordomos* except that, in this case, the sponsors are the outgoing authorities who are the festival's *fiesteros* (Chapter 2). In both places, this festival is considered the greatest, only comparable in Chianarkam to the Holy Week with regards to the amount of people attending.<sup>225</sup> One of the main differences between the two festivals is the prevalence of moderation during the Holy Week on one hand, and the waste of money and alcohol consumption during the *Sasab cha'm* on the other.

#### BECOMING ANCESTORS

The thirteen cargo officers represent the community's ancestors in the process of deification, while they in turn are in their process of 'ancestralisation'.<sup>226</sup> At Juktir, it is relevant that nowadays only former *gobernador primero*, and the communal *xiotalh* leaders,<sup>227</sup> are buried in the church yard.<sup>228</sup> This literally places them a few steps from the other deities in the church and renders them objects of worship, since people also pray to them asking for favours (Reyes et al. 2015).<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> The celebration of the Holy Week in Kauxbilhim stands out in the region given its discretion.

<sup>226</sup> Coyle (2001: 134) notes something similar for courthouse officers among the Cora from Santa Teresa, he mentions that this process 'places men on the second step of a stairway that leads upward to the heavens'. Among the Huichol, Neurath (2008a: 33) observes that the *peyoteros* from the *tukipa* temple do not represent deified ancestors but rather the community's founders in the process of becoming ancestors themselves.

<sup>227</sup> In Kauxbilhim, only children under five years are buried in the church forecourt. Also, in this community there is a cemetery especially for former communal *xiotalh* leaders.

<sup>228</sup> It was in the mid-19th Century through civil 'reformation laws' (1857), when the Mexican Federal Government announced that churchyards were no longer going to function as graveyards. However, had different and specific effects on O'dam communities and each has adapted in its own way.

<sup>229</sup> The cult to the dead is not restricted to former governors or deceased *xiotalh* leaders. In general, people ask for favors at the tombs in the cemetery, especially of their deceased relatives. Nevertheless, in general this is seen as a 'dark request', but this is not the case for those buried at the church.



**Image 37 Cult to former authority at Juktir's churchyard**

Before the courthouse and church officers achieve social recognition, there is a long way to go. Everything starts with the nomination and a gradual approach to the authority embodied in the ribboned wooden staffs, not unlike the *mayordomos* in relation to the patron saints or the *mamkagim* novices to their arrows (Chapter 3 and the conclusions of Part I). In Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco de Ocotán this is clearer, as the whole process of power transmission lasts almost six months: from nomination (during the *xiotalh* in September and October respectively) to the *Sasab cha'm* in May. But even in Santa María de Ocotán where this period is shorter, given that the whole process is accomplished on the first day of the year, afterwards the incoming cargo authorities ought to 'count Fridays' (Chapter 2) abiding by the corresponding abstinences for five weeks. At Santa María de Ocotán they do this in January and February, making offerings to the deities at the church as well as in a chapel on the top of the Naksir tam, Scorpion Hill, where tradition states that the Virgin Mary had her first apparition. In the three communities in January, the new authorities have to call and celebrate the New Year *xiotalh*. In San Francisco de Ocotán, this is similar to the fast in Juktir by the new authorities, who strictly celebrate five consecutive *xiotalh* over 35 days. Additionally, in Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco de Ocotán, the incoming officers must

also hold the respective abstinences during the *Sasab cha'm* at the end of May, when they perform as *mayordomos*.

While the courthouse officers are 'Counting Fridays' (Chapter 2) and participating in the communal *xiotalh*, they do not carry out their everyday duties, of solving conflicts between the *comuneros*. Since they are *xidhuukam*, 'blessed', they must avoid becoming angry as they are at risk of getting ill. For this reason, it is common that they choose an *interino*, 'temporary substitute', to carry out certain tasks. Substitutes are normally former authorities or respected men experienced in O'dam traditions.

In their work as judges, the courthouse officers occupy specific places in the courthouse or Casa Real, the 'Royal House'. These offices are long buildings with two tables inside; one for the proper government and another for the military authorities. The tables are located close to the back wall, one alongside the other with a narrow space between. Along the other walls, there are benches for the audience to sit on. In Juktir, the office is located on the main village street, which runs from the church on the southern side to the chapel and communal kitchens (used by *mayordomos* during celebrations) on the northern side. Here the building is located on the west side of the street along a north-south axis, with the entrance facing east. With this arrangement, the officers face eastwards during the session at the courthouse, the *jix kai'* and the proper government sit at the northern table (on the left), while the *capitán* and the military authorities take place on the southern table (on the right). In Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim –where there are no proper streets – the courthouse is arranged along an east-west axis with the entrance access at the south. Here, the positions are arranged in a similar way to Juktir, considering the local orientation. Over the tables and hanging from the ceiling, there is a wooden cross suspended from a thread made with *toxiom* flowers (*cempasúchil*, *Tagetes erecta*) which are renewed every year on *Santur tam*. This cross provides solemnity and sacredness to the enclosure as it is stated in formal speeches: 'It is God who speaks through us, because God's word and hand are on this table, at this courthouse, under this holy cross on the holy table' (Rosa 2003: 62; Chapter 2).

In the course of their daily duties as justice deliverers, the courthouse officers deal with what is considered by Mexican law as 'minor offences', which are normally assignments reserved for municipal authorities: robbery, street fights and domestic violence, as well as other more serious offences such as polygamy,<sup>230</sup> invading someone else's fields and any other sources of conflicts among the *comuneros*. In this duty, the courthouse officers display their capacity for *ilhdha*' or intelligence.<sup>231</sup> They must be smart enough to manage reconciliation among the *comuneros* by acting as wise as the ancestors, who given their wisdom and sacrifice, left the earth to go to heaven.

In this regard, the judges do not have the last word on the issues they debate and resolve in the courthouse. This is because it is not only 'God who speaks through them' but also the elders and the community as a whole, and this is more than figurative. The trials are particularly hard for accused people because they are publicly exposed to the community. Everyone is allowed to speak<sup>232</sup> while the accused remain immobile standing up before the authorities (sometimes with their hands tied) hearing the admonishments against them. Elderly men and women are the most active in this respect. In such situations the *courthouse* officers and the elders must deal not only with the reconciliation of individuals but with kinship groups as well. When a person is presented before the *jueces* (after being captured and put in jail) at the courthouse, the relatives are called to provide support and to speak in favour and defence of the accused. Depending on the gravity of the offence, there are situations when delays in the public trial are requested until relatives arrive, sometimes from remote places.

The *jix kaĩ* and his body of authorities are perpetually learning in their own way to become elders and ultimately ancestors. At the end, they deliver judgement based on what other people, especially the elders, have said during the trial, and in this respect support is guaranteed. In this regard, in Santa María

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230 Polygyny is socially accepted (under certain rules) in so far as there is no formal complaint from any of the wives. When this happens, all the individuals involved are called to the courthouse in search for an agreement. The Tepehuan authorities are quite aware of the fact that those offences are sanctioned differently under Mexican law and they avoid, as much as possible, going to be judged outside the community.

231 Intelligence for the O'dam is a capacity which resides in the heart (Cf. Willett 2007).

232 Although in practice not everybody does. The major moral authority is held by the elders, men and women, and they are also hard to contest.

de Ocotán, the role of the *capitán* is particularly important in providing experience and wise insights for the rest of the officers. Since the position of the *jix ka'* is achieved through political campaigns, they do not have enough experience in these matters. However, the *capitán's* position is normally reserved for an old and honourable man, who is knowledgeable about *el costumbre*. This profile would be ideal for the position of *jix ka'* in Santiago Teneraca, as long as he has not already held the position. Thus, in Santa María de Ocotán the *capitán's* designation is the social recognition of those exemplary elders who probably will not achieve the governor's position given their lack of interest in politics.

#### THE COURTHOUSE OFFICERS AND THE PUBLIC CEREMONIES

In impersonating Jix ka' chio'n as founder of *el costumbre*, the *gobernador primero* is responsible for its perpetuation. He and the rest of the courthouse officers lead the communal public ceremonies in the church-courthouse festivals and have a central role during the communal *xiotalh*. In their character as founders, for instance, during the first celebrations in Juktir of Our Lady of Candles (2<sup>nd</sup> February), Saint Anthony of Padua (13<sup>th</sup> of June) in 2000, and later in 2003 in San Juan Diego (9<sup>th</sup> of December), the *gobernador primero* and *segundo*, as well as the two *alcaldes*, acted as the outgoing *mayordomos* handing over the celebration to the next set of *mayordomos*.

**The courthouse officers and the church festivals.** In general, during these celebrations, the courthouse officers sanction their development, since the biggest responsibility lies with the *mayordomos* (Chapter 2). Their primary participation is to accompany the processions holding lighted candles and leading the contingent from the church to the chapel (and the return), where the patron saints rest and receive offerings of foodstuffs. As with the chapel, the courthouse constitutes a precinct where the patron saints have to visit, the *mayordomos* deliver offerings, and the dancers perform. At the courthouse, the officers are the hosts and they, as well as the deities, are the recipients of these offerings.



**Image 38 *Gobernador primero* (right) and *gobernador segundo* (left) with corn offerings at the courthouse in Juktir**

Their participation stands out in four festivals when their 'ancestral authority' is emphasised. These are: *Santur tam* (All Saints Day of the Dead), New Year (the handing over of the staffs), the *Sasab cha'm* (at Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim), and the Holy Week. Besides, at Juktir their participation during the festivals for the Virgin of Nativity (8<sup>th</sup> of September) and San Francisco of Assisi (4<sup>th</sup> of October) are celebrations related to the courthouse officers since these dates are part of the election process. Nevertheless, as a consequence of the three year exercise terms, their character in this respect has been diminished.

The Dead and the Holy Week celebrations emphasise the ancestral character of the cargo officers. The 'authority of the ancestors' is displayed (Cf. Jáuregui et al. 2003; Reyes 2009b: 155) as well as their solar attributes. During the first, the dead arrive in the human world and frequent the old places as they used to:

They are on the streets like everybody else. They normally arrive here about the 25<sup>th</sup> of October and leave on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November. This year, many dead have come, I saw them in my dreams, they are around even if one cannot see them; but one can feel them: listen to the wind, it means the spirits are passing (Cesareo Morales, Juktir, 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 2011).



In Juktir, the presence of the dead during the *Santur tam* eclipses –also highlights – the solar character of the courthouse officers who temporarily retire allowing the children to occupy the courthouse (Chapter 2). The presence of the dead in the village is indicated by the constant ringing of church bells, but as with funerals, this indicates their retirement and farewell. The dead leave on the morning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November after the bells have rung for twenty-four hours, and the ‘adult’ officers return to the courthouse. At Chianarkam, the ancestral basis of authority is more evident. Here the visiting dead sanction the new and recently elected cargo officers when they are publicly introduced in the courthouse during the evening of *Santur tam*.

During Holy week, the solar power of the *jix kai*’ and the proper government dies alongside Jesus. The *capitán* and the military authorities remain as sunbeams fighting the darkness in order for the solar powers to arise. In Juktir and Chianarkam (not Kauxbilhim), on the morning of Holy Thursday, following the introduction of the crucifixes into the Holy Sepulchre, the *capitán* takes the ribboned wooden staffs from the *gobernador primero* and the proper government officers and places them in the tomb. Then the military cargos become the maximum authority as long as Jesus and the government remain dead.

The Holy Week and the rainy season represent ‘nights of the year’ dominated by dark forces. Among the Au’dam (the Tepehuan from the west side of the Mezquital river) and among the Cora, this character is established and displayed by the presence of the *sargentos* army (Reyes 2015a) and by the *judíos* army (Cf. Coyle 2001: 148-176; Jáuregui y Magriñá 2015; Reyes and Oseguera 2015), both are transformations of the military authorities. Among the O’dam this nocturnal environment is set by the display, all around the village, of woven round ‘shields’ called *chimall* (from Nahuatl *tzimalli*, shield), made of *sotol* (*Brahea dulcis*) leaves which resemble stars. Among the O’dam, the *capitán* leads a force of archers made up of all the men in the celebration. They represent the army of the morning star and herald the sun announcing its (re-)birth after its journey through the underworld of the night (Reyes 2006a: 178-185), as stated in mythology:

Well! —, said God our Father, — let's bet. Let's test our powers, and we will see the place we will have in the sky. [...] The sun rose, shot his flaming arrows, the rocks melted and the animals ran into the caves. The Star, covered with ice, resisted the deluge of fire. Then it was the Star's turn, the sky clouded and rained for five days, the sun cooled down, went weak, and went out. —You won the bet— said God our Father. —Starting today, you will be my guide, my *capitán*, the one going ahead, the one announcing me [...]. (Benítez 1980: 123-124)<sup>233</sup>

The frequent ringing of the wooden bells during the Holy Days (not exclusive to O'dam celebrations) replicates very well the permanent ringing of the bells in the church tower during the *Santur tam*. This is an indication of the presence of the ancestors: '*judíos* are around but we cannot see them: it is why we are shooting arrows' (Reyes 2006a: 176).

During the mornings of Holy Thursday and Holy Friday, all the archers shoot their arrows. In Juktir, they aim at *nopal* (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) set at the front and edges of each churchyard which are approximately 20m apart. In Chianarkam this is different with the archers sitting themselves on the top of a low hill located approximately 60m away from the church. Here they shoot their arrows at the church, with the arrow trajectories forming a parabola.<sup>234</sup> Most arrows end up hitting the church's metal roof or the ground.

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<sup>233</sup> My translation from Spanish.

<sup>234</sup> The two different styles of archery and arrows are used (Reyes 2010a).



**Image 39 Bowman during Holy Week in Chianarkam**

For the military authorities, the ruling term ends with the resurrection of Jesus and the authorities. On the morning of Holy Saturday, when the church officers open the church doors (Chapter 2), there is an atmosphere of celebration framed by the aromatic burning of incense, the explosion of fireworks, and songs of the musicians. In Chianarkam, the children in the church chorus blow through small (about 10cm) bamboo straws into cups of water, producing birdlike noises. Once inside the church officers take the ribboned wooden staffs out of the Holy Sepulchre and return them to the *jix kai'* and other officers. After this, the officers put the crucifixes back on the altar and the dancers destroy the sepulchre.

Before the military authorities retire completely and return the authority to the *jix kai'*, they have to supervise a weapons check in the courthouse. In Juktir, men must have with them and present to the authorities: an outfit made of white cotton; a wooden bow with the string in good condition; a quiver containing 25 short arrows (the healing type) and twelve large straight arrows with feathers; a slingshot; a spare string for the bow; a *bule* or hollow long gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*, sin. *L. vulgaris*) as a water container; a small bag with *tuisap* (toasted ground corn flour) for food supplies; and a hand knife (Reyes 2006a: 179). In

Chianarkam, adult men present similar weapons to those in Juktir, but children and teenagers who are in the roles of cadets must carry and exhibit long (about 3m) *otate* canes (*Otatea acuminata aztecorum*) as spears. After this, (approximately two hours), the *jix kai'* takes full control of the village authority.



**Image 40 Weapons checking at Chianarkam**

The Holy Week celebration in Kauxbilhim stands out in the regional context since it is quite discreet: people from the *anexos* do not come to participate very often, and as their authorities say 'this is a *capitán's* festival'. This only confirms that during this celebration the governor's power is diminished.

**The courthouse officers at the *xiotalh* patio.** The ancestral character of the courthouse officers is clearly displayed during the communal *xiotalh* celebrations. In the process of becoming ancestors, they impersonate the ancestors in their own process of becoming deities. However, given that during

that time ‘they were not yet important’, their authority is diminished by the prevailing character of the *xiotalh* leaders who, on the other hand, are already real living ancestors (Chapter 4).

According to accounts, many of the actions conducted by the ancestors were addressed in the pursuit of the first sunrise and the stabilisation of the world. The celebration of *xiotalh* commonly takes place in O’dam mythology in relation to relevant cosmological events with lasting effects for all the people. They can be: the first sunrise and the baptism of the sun (Benítez 1980: 144; Montoya 1973); the first beneficial rain (Benítez 1980: 144; Reyes 2006a: 240); the solidification of the original wet-soft world (Reyes 2006a: 175); the domestication of the telluric forces embodied by the old ancestor Chu’ulh (Benítez 1980: 130; Hobgood 1970). The current state of the mythological records among the O’dam vaguely mentions these events. However, when we consider the stories, the prayers and the ritual actions all together, this character reveals itself.<sup>235</sup>

Among the O’dam, the ancestors who are incarnated in the persons of the courthouse officers are often alluded to in the accounts as different sets of twelve or thirteen people (the governor plus twelve officers): the twelve apostles; the twelve *pueblos* (nations); the twelve *cabildantes* (town council members), in pursuit of the first sunrise:

Long time ago, in the beginning, before our grandparents’ time, the sun did not illuminate very well. It looked like only the moon was out. It did not warm up. Then, the twelve Tepehuan *pueblos* (Santa María [de Ocotán], Lajas, Teneraca, Xonconoxtle, Milpillas, Candelaria, Taxicaringa and others) had a meeting and agreed to have a communal *xiotalh*. [...] They fasted and danced for five years [...]. The sun still did not warmed up. They kept celebrating the *xiotalh* and then, they thought what they needed was a name for the sun [...] suddenly, the hare<sup>236</sup> saw

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<sup>235</sup> Not to mention comparing the mythology of the rest of the Gran Nayar area since mythology among the Huichol, the Cora and the Mexicanero has been widely explored. These accounts are often related to the actions of the Mother Earth and the Morning Star creating the world (Neurath 2002: 89-98; Preuss 1998 [1908]: 257-258), as well as the actions of deities going around the world hunting a deer and finding the place of the sunrise (Medina 2012; Zingg 1998 [1934]).

<sup>236</sup> The hare or the rabbit since O’dam has one term, ‘*tomb*’ that refers to both. As Montoya (1973), the ethnographer who recorded the story mentions, this account corresponds with the well-known Mesoamerican story of the creation of the fifth sun in Teotihuacan. The O’dam version puts together those elements reported by Sahugún for mythology from central Mexico (Lévi-Strauss 1992: 285) and those from North America studied by Lévi-Strauss (1992: 52,67). In the former, the sun and the moon had irregular trajectories and the gods did not know from

the sun appearing over the horizon and said to it, 'God Our Father', and then the sun rose well, warmed up well, and followed its correct path. The five God Fathers got upset with the hare [...] they persecuted, hit, and stretched out its mouth and ears (Montoya 1973: 49).<sup>237</sup>

In relation to the creation, another account briefly mentions:

A boy [the morning star] came down to earth, formed the *xiotalh* patio at Santa María [de Ocotán], sat down on his stool, and started playing [the bow] and singing. It was possible to hear the bow's sound all around the world. On the first day the herbs appeared; on the second day the trees and the flowers were born; the third day the animals were born; the fourth the humans; and the fifth day the sky was illuminated and the sun appeared (Benítez 1980: 123).<sup>238</sup>

These events are also mentioned in the *xiotalh* prayer,<sup>239</sup> 'the confession' (described below), mentions that the *xiotalh* is celebrated to emulate the gods when they created 'everything':

[...] Anyway, we are here at the *Patio Mayor*, where they [the gods] designated themselves, when they appeared during those remote years, on the infant earth [...] Then Jix kai' chio'n arrived with his bow and his sticks and his gourd to inform the heavens that he was fulfilling [the *xiotalh*] [...] they started dancing which lasted the whole night. Then the first dawn came, and the second dawn, the third, the fourth, and the fifth, Jix kai' chio'n stood up from his seat and went to heaven. [...] God Our Father made the earth, populated it with trees and flowers, and brought the rains, turning everything green and growing sacred fruits. [...] We bring firewood; we bring flowers as you [God] did in those remote years, in those first years. We do not do these things in the way our grandparents did. We are forgetting our customs. However, here we are [...] We want to have cows, ships, goats, chickens and all the animals that God left (Benítez 1980: 91-92).<sup>240</sup>

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which direction they were going to rise. Besides, they shone with the same intensity. The gods struck the moon with a rabbit in order to correct the problem. In the northwest of North America, mythology states that the hare laughed at Coyote's wife's vulva and then she struck him on the face, making his snout the way it is in the present.

<sup>237</sup> My translation from Spanish.

<sup>238</sup> My translation from Spanish.

<sup>239</sup> It is important to mention that I have not been close enough to the communal *xiotalh* leaders at Juktir while they say their own prayers. Consequently, I do not know if they are more explicit in this matter.

<sup>240</sup> My translation from Spanish. Accordingly to Aciano de la Rosa Calleros (R.I.P.), personal communication, he dictated to or as in this case translated this and other texts for Fernando Benítez.

The creation of the world and the first sunrise are, in the end, ‘the same thing’: things came to be as they are after the sun appeared for the first time.

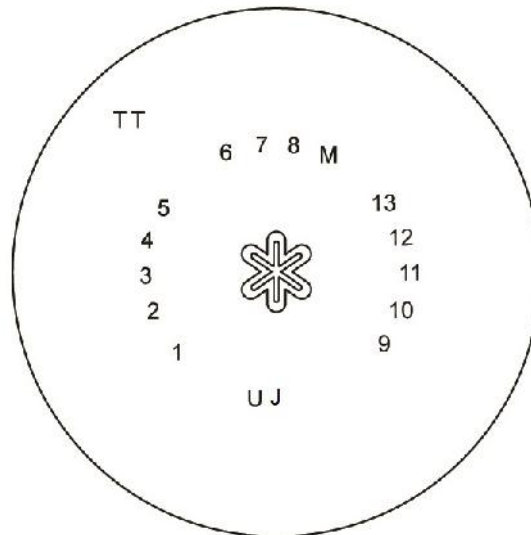
In his role of the *xiotalh*’s founder (Cf. Hobgood 1970: 405), the *jix kai*’ calls the *comuneros* together (Reyes 2006a: 96; Sánchez 1980: 97). He sends letters to every *anexo* and, in recent years, he transmits messages through the indigenous radio station XEJMN, *La voz de los cuatro pueblos*, ‘The Voice of the Four Nations (transmitting in Cora, Huichol, Tepehuan and Mexicanero). This was established in the Cora village of Jesús María del Nayar, and more recently in the new radio station opened in Juktir in 2012, XETPH, *La tres voces de Durango*, The Three Voices of Durango (Huichol, Tepehuan and Mexicanero). Many people say the *jix kai*’ also has the power to force people to attend the *xiotalh*, and will bring them tied up if they refuse (Reyes 2006a: 96). In a similar way, the *jix kai*’ must pay attention and be courteous to the *xiotalh* leaders to facilitate their arrival to the *xiotalh* patio, as well as providing them with food during the celebration (Benítez 1980: 86; Reyes 2006a: 96). In this regard, the *comuneros* make the *jix kai*’ responsible for a poor attendance at the *xiotalh*.

During the *xiotalh* all the authorities are assembled as in primordial times (Chapter 4) each has a specific place to sit around the fire. In Juktir, the courthouse officers sit, forming a circle around the central bonfire, exhibiting their internal hierarchy and structure. This arrangement also highlights an opposition between the *xiotalh* leaders and the church officers as well as an opposition between the ‘proper government’ and the military authorities (Reyes 2006a: 81). The first opposition corresponds to the different scopes of the deities, the church and the *xiotalh*, while the second opposition exhibits the contrast otherwise expressed during the Holy Week. This arrangement is different in Chianarkam, where all the cargo officers and the *jich oo’dagim* sit facing the east along a north-south axis. The *xiotalh* leader sits (as a mediator) in the middle in front of the fire, between the *jix kai*’ and the ‘proper government’ on his left (north) and the *capitán* and the military on his right (south).<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> I have no information in this regard for Kauxbilhim.





J= Jix oo'dagim	1= Gobernador Primero	M= Mandante	9= Capitàn
U= Umuagim	2=Gobernador Segundo	6= Fiscal	10= Sargento
T= <i>Tua'dam</i>	3 =Alcalde Mayor	7= Tupil	11= Cabo
	4=Alcalde Segundo		12= Guerra
	5 Alguacil Mayor		13= Alferez
	6 Alguacil Segundo		

**Diagram 6 Communal authorities on the *xiotalh* patio in Juktir (Reyes 2006a:80)**



**Image 41 Courthouse officers on the *xiotalh* patio at Chianarkam**



On the morning of the first day of the *xiotalh*, all the courthouse officers hand over their ribboned wooden staffs to the *xiotalh* leaders. The latter hang the staffs from the altar, keeping a similar disposition to their seated owners. The location of the staffs at the altar reveals their proximity to the gods, which is greater than their owners' proximity. This also reveals the staffs' character as embodiments of authority.<sup>242</sup>



**Image 42 Ribboned wooden staffs at the *xiotalh* altar in Juktir**

After the ceremonial leaders light the fire in the centre of the patio, the ceremony formally begins with the communal prayer known as *la confesión*, the confession. In Juktir, it falls to the *jix kai'* to say the first words and to start

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<sup>242</sup> In Juktir, the thirteen officers place their staffs at the altar, while in Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim only those five officers corresponding to the proper government hang their staffs on the altar.

praying.<sup>243</sup> The second governor and the other authorities follow him and ultimately so do all the assistants. Holding the ribboned staff in his hands, the *jix kai'* starts by saying '*con el favour de Dios*', with God's favour; or '*válgate Dios*', take this into account, God. Delivering these speeches is a skill achieved through the constant participation in both communal and kinship *xiotalh*. It is not only learning the prayer's words, since it is flexible in this respect and open to incorporating the speaker's own words. Nevertheless, there are many formulas to learn, and a good orator must be capable of speaking for about thirty minutes, addressing the deities on behalf of the community. In recent years, many of the governors, who have devoted much time to 'doing politics', have not developed this ability and they have to be assisted by an elder in this duty. To this end, the *jix kai'* designates a *gobernador interino*, temporary governor, to speak in his place.<sup>244</sup>

In Juktir, every morning the *alguacil mayor* sends five young men to hunt for deer. These young men are invested with an *otate* cane (*Otatea acuminata aztecorum*) as *alguaciles*.<sup>245</sup> They represent the ancestors at an early stage of their transformation into gods, when they were looking around the world for the deer and the first sunrise. In Juktir, the hunters go without food or water, looking for deer in the four cardinal directions: east on Monday, north on Tuesday, west on Wednesday; south on Thursday; and east again on Friday, the place of the sunrise. Contrary to the majority of kinship *xiotalh*, at the communal level, it is never expected that the hunters return with the deer, but they come back every day with bunches of flowers collected on their journey to offer on the altar in place of the deer (Reyes 2006a: 110-113).

Every morning after the hunters leave the *jix kai'* leads *la confesión*. After the prayer, he leads in the gathering of firewood, which they take with them to the *xiotalh* patio to feed the bonfire. This is the routine for the courthouse

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<sup>243</sup> In Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim it is the *xiotalh* leader, the *jichoo'dagim*, who introduces the prayer, but then it corresponds to the *jix kai'* to lead the speech.

<sup>244</sup> Often when I participated in the communal *xiotalh* in Juktir, from 1999 to 2001, I saw Don Reyes Morales (about 100 years old by that time) receiving the ribboned staff from the governor and starting the prayer. In 1979, Benitez (1980: 89) witnessed the same action performed by Don Reyes Morales on behalf of the governor at that time.

<sup>245</sup> This is an O'dam adaptation of the Spanish word '*alguacil*', the lowest charge in the rank. According to mythology, *alguaciles* correspond to the fox in the group of the original hunters, given their skill to walk around *la sierra* (Reyes 2006a: 84).

officers in Juktir for the first four mornings of the *xiotalh*. These actions are similar in Chianarkam and Kauxbilhim, except for the deer hunting which they do not do at communal level but which, on the other hand, they do effect at the kinship level.

In Juktir, for the last two days of the celebration, the courthouse officers lead and accompany the *xiotalh* leaders delivering offerings in *Susbanta'm*, the Toad's Place, and in: the badgers and raccoons, the crows, the mice, the ice (or snow) and the illness (Reyes 2006a: 143-149). In the first case, as the toad is responsible for bringing good rain, the offerings are to ask for his favour; in the latter cases, the offerings are to ask those agents to keep away and to not damage the maize fields or people.

The last night of the ceremony, the courthouse officers lead the dance in the company of the *xiotalh* leaders. On the morning of the sixth day (the fifth in Kauxbilhim), the ceremony ends after the sunrise with the *xiotalh* leaders facing eastwards and the sun. The courthouse officers then recover their ribboned staffs and they lead a procession to the church, where they pay their respects to the church gods by lighting candles. Finally, all the participants enjoy a hot stew and other food to break the ritual fasting.

#### THE COMMUNITIES AND THE MESTIZO WORLD

Neither the relationship of O'dam communities with the Spanish-mestizo world or the manifestations of the gods, are novel in the region as described at the beginning of this chapter. In 1956 and 1957, there were reports of two apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the vicinity of Juktir (Riley and Hobgood 1959). The message the Guadalupana had for the O'dam in the first apparition was:

I have been all over the world to see how the people behave. To some people, God has left written records; to others only what has been spoken. The Tepehuan should not give up the *mitotes*. Do not use Mexican things. Do not wear the clothing of the Mexicans. Do not wear *huaraches de hule* (sandals made from tire rubber) (Riley and Hobgood 1959: 357).

In a second apparition, the Virgin also ordered the O'dam to give up foreign clothes, and foreign household utensils. They were to kill or sell a black or dark goat, cow, horse or mule to the Mexicans (Riley and Hobgood 1959: 358).<sup>246</sup> It became a mass destruction of utensils and cattle killing. Framing this 'nativistic movement' was the increasing infringement on Tepehuan timber rights, as a consequence of the recent interest of the Mexican government and private entrepreneurs on large timber reserves. Furthermore, a severe drought affected the region in the preceding years (Riley and Hobgood 1959: 356). There was also the case of recent apparitions in 2010-2011 by this time. This was undoubtedly the settlement of a new relation between Tepehuan communities and the non-indigenous world, a relation which went beyond the social group, which in Amerindian thought implies the scope of the 'extra-human' (Cf. Viveiros de Castro 2013:430).

The Guadalupana's request for animal sacrifices revealed not only their European origin but their dark and dangerous character too. They are reminiscent of the dark goat offered to the illness during the *xiotalh* in Juktir, as well as dark goat's fur being used by healers during the 'soul's banishment ceremonies' (Chapter 6). In this case, it is to highlight that although it was a 'god from church' (which are often characterised as mestizo) who proclaimed this request, the Guadalupana is also widely recognised as a specifically indigenous Virgin.

In their role as communal leaders, it is the duty of the courthouse officers to act as intermediaries with the mestizo-outside world. However, in this regard, the courthouse officers share such responsibility with the agrarian authorities and, to some extent, with the schoolteachers. Although the *gobiernos tradicionales* have no recognition in Mexican law, they are *ipso facto* its

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<sup>246</sup> I have registered testimonies about many apparitions by this time occurring in other places in *la sierra*. Furthermore, Cramussell (2010) reports a similar event in the Au'dam village of San Bernardino de Milpillas in 1954. In this case, the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to a young man, and through his intermediation transmitted similar requests to the Au'dam. Rangel and Marín (2011) reported a situation with an apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the 'mid-20th century', near the Au'dam village of San Francisco de Lajas. It is interesting to note a similar 'discourse of resistance' had been reported since colonial times in the area. For instance, in 1615 an Indian named Quautlatas wondered around the village of Durango, carrying a 'small idol' similar to Christ. The documents also showed that he had 'two letters from God Father', calling together all the Indians in rebellion against the Spaniards (Deeds 1992: 15).

executors in many matters. This sets out an ambiguous situation often used by the state in its favour when it wants to pass over the traditional authorities. However, since the communities find in their territoriality one of the bases for their conceptualization, the agrarian authorities, fully recognised by Mexican law through the *ley agraria* play a key role in these inter- and extra-communal relations. Moreover, this establishes a permanent potential source of conflict with the traditional authorities too. The teachers are in a similar situation because of their contact and potentially significant knowledge of the mestizo world, especially as 'bilingual teachers' (Spanish-O'dam). It is common that the teachers run as candidates to be agrarian authorities and maybe later to become presidents in the municipality.

The agrarian authorities, known as the *comisariado de bienes comunales* (Communal Property Commission), and the *concejo de vigilancia* (Monitor council) (Ley Agraria 2005), are the legal body in charge of the administration and watching over of the communal lands.<sup>247</sup> They are elected every three years in each community similar to the courthouse officers in Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle. In such processes the political parties are very much (informally) involved in investing money and supporting the candidates.

The sovereignty of the community rests on the assembly integrated by all the *comuneros*, which in the three cases broached here are all O'dam born, men and women. The agrarian authorities are the community's representatives in this regard and the *presidente* of the *comisariado* has legal power over communal lands. This endows him with the power of negotiation in any territorial issue whether with other communities or with external agents as the state or the timber industry. Given that each community has its own version of its territorial boundaries, the relations between communities have mainly focused on lands limits, which is a recurrent source of conflict.

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<sup>247</sup> As one of the most important outcomes of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1940), the State distributed lands by the creation of *ejidos* and the legal recognition of the *comunidades*, the latter mainly held by indigenous population. These *comunidades* are founded in the validation of long time land tenures, most of the times formerly acknowledged by the Spanish administration during the colonial time, through the documents known as *Mercedes Reales* (Sandoval et al. 1999: 91).

The aspects of the mestizo world that the agrarian authorities deal with are considered dark. In consequence and opposition to the courthouse officers (representing the Morning Star), the agrarian authorities have darkish attributes. Although nobody is willing to admit any kind of commitment to such dark forces, people assume that agrarian authorities get their favours by 'fasting with them on the cliffs', as referred to in a joke people from Santa María de Ocotán tell about a well-known local politician:

There was this man who wished to become *jix kai*' and went to a cliff and ask for the favour of the Ja'ok<sup>248</sup>. The latter asked him, -who are you offering [to die] in exchange-.

-Well, I offer 'this person'- the man replied. Afterwards that person died and the man became *jix kai*'.

Sometime later, the same person wished to become *comisariado*, he went to the cliff and asked again for a favour. The Ja'ok asked him, -who are you offering [to die] in exchange-.

-Well, I offer 'this person'- the man replied. Afterwards that person died and the man became *comisariado*.

Sometime later, the same person wished to be *presidente municipal*, he went to the cliff asked again for a favour. The Ja'ok asked him, -who are you offering [to die] in exchange-.

-Well, I offer 'this person' [naming a renowned O'dam politician]- the man replied. But then the Ja'ok said, -'Come on man, I can't do that, that guy's my friend!'

The relation between *gobiernos tradicionales* and the agrarian authorities has been more conflict-ridden in Santa María de Ocotán than in other communities, given the economic and political power they have achieved. This is mainly due to the fact that Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle: a) was the first community legally recognized by the Mexican state (1936), while San Francisco de Ocotán (1974) and Santiago Teneraca (1965) achieved this status later (Rosa 2003: 66); b) it is the biggest forestry community in Mexico (421,139 ha); and c) it is the community with the most timberland in the region. In contrast, the territory of Santiago Teneraca is mainly located in the lowlands with poor timber resources. These conditions render Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle the target of external powers with a desire for extraction, while the internal 'leaders' attempt to benefit from it. Consequently, while in Santiago Teneraca and San Francisco

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<sup>248</sup> People commonly translate this name as 'the devil' (Chapter 2).

de Ocotán the relations between the *gobierno tradicional* and the agrarian authorities tend to be equilibrated, and most of the time the latter are under the approval of the former, in Santa María de Ocotán this tends to be unstable and tense (Reyes 2010b), although this brings a balance between two powerful groups of people. The power of action of both sets of authorities is based on the approval of the same population and they have the same territorial jurisdiction. The *comisariado de bienes comunales* is indeed the community's representatives for land tenure issues, but the *jix kai'* and the courthouse officers are the communal judges. In recent years, many of these tensions have been solved because the same political groups have achieved both sets of authorities.

Many people in Santa María de Ocotán explain that the change from one to three year terms, as well as the way elections are run, was with the intention of setting an equilibrium between the traditional authorities in relation to the *comisariado* and the municipal agents. Officially, the courthouse officers do not get a salary for this job. However, depending on their political capital they can negotiate agreements with the municipality or with the state of Durango to receive funding. In this regard, the authorities from Santa María de Ocotán are more likely to receive money than the others. The *comisariado de bienes comunales* administers and distributes the profits of timber sales, but they can also benefit from the bribes received either from external politicians or the industry.

Such accumulation of resources by the *comisariado de bienes comunales* escalated into a crisis in Santa María de Ocotán in 1998, when its *presidente* was accused (alongside environmental authorities) of corruption by a small group of *comuneros*. As a result, he was found guilty and sentenced to prison. In 1999, federal authorities declared the community overexploited and suspended the industry for ten years.<sup>249</sup> The suspension ended in 2010 and since then, the idea of re-starting timber exploitation has been discussed without agreement. Many *comuneros* are reluctant and regarding this say that following the same path represents a potential source of problems. The

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<sup>249</sup> SEMARNAT, 21 January, Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle, Informe Técnico.

*comuneros* in San Francisco de Ocotán and Santiago Teneraca have recently shown a similar opinion.

## CONCLUSIONS

Among the many consequences of the recurring apparitions of the gods in *la sierra*, most of the *comuneros* in San Francisco de Ocotán quit drinking and are heavily penalised for selling alcohol. There are many anecdotes about such events, for example the one about the man who was exhorted by one of the 'Messiahs' to dance the *xiotalh* while carrying his cat. In this community, the *comuneros* pushed the authorities to attend to the god's requirements by fulfilling their responsibility as mediators between humans and deities, keeping abstinences and delivering offerings. As a consequence, this community has stopped participating in the timber industry thus cooperating with Santiago Teneraca and San Pedro Jícoras in this regard.

In contrast, in Santa María de Ocotán the authorities were reluctant about attending the signals from the gods and people started talking. At the beginning of 2012, during the New Year's *xiotalh* celebration, people discussed paying a visit to one of the boys who saw one of the gods earlier in 2011, and invited him to accompany them during the *xiotalh* celebration. One reason which made this decision difficult was that the *jix kai'* had not attended the ceremony. Later, during the second *xiotalh* (they decided to celebrate five consecutively), there was news about a car accident close to Huazamota in which apparently the *jix kai'* lost his life. In the event, it was one of his companions who had passed away, however the *jix kai'* did break his arm and people had no doubt that it was a sign from the gods because he was not fulfilling his duties as an authority.



## Chapter 6

### The *mamkagim*, the healing process, and the dead

During the *jootos* the *makgim* calls [the souls'] from Itchameet, [the Place of Death]. To this end [the *makgim*] asks for permission from Itchameet's authorities, because [you know] they have their own authorities there. Then they allow the souls to come. When the souls arrive, all the relatives talk to them to comfort them. Let's say, if one of their sons offended them, he has to apologise and put an end to the problem. The relatives gather all the belongings together; if there is anything missing like a belt, a gun or something else, the souls complain. Women fashion some animals with maize dough: a cow, a donkey, a horse, a dog; and the souls name them. If the souls are satisfied and the healer does a good job, the souls go to be with God our Father. Everyone has to be there [in that situation], including healers themselves

(Pascual Morales, Santa María de Ocotán, 7 September 2007).

#### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I describe a *jootos* or 'soul's banishment ceremony' as an example of a healing process performed by the *mamkagim*, the healers. As discussed in Chapter 3, illness among the O'dam can be understood as an imbalance in the relationship between humans and deities, a situation which has to be amended by the intervention of a *makgim*; otherwise people are in permanent danger of dying. Along these lines, the state of mourning is considered an illness since there is tension in the relationship between the bereaved relatives, the deceased, the gods of death and the regeneration of life. To this end, the bereaved relatives as well as the souls of the deceased, must participate in the *jootos*.<sup>250</sup> In this ceremony, the specialist, known as *jot'sadam*, calls the soul of the dead or *kakoi'* (plural *kokkoi'*) from Chameet,<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> A literal translation for *jootos* could also be 'soul's sending off ceremony'. However, O'dam people express a feeling for keeping the souls of the dead away, and in that respect, the name 'soul's banishment ceremony' defines it well. Furthermore, the O'dam refer to the ceremony in Spanish as '*correr el alma*', 'to run the souls', which refers to the moment in the ceremony when the souls pass through the ceremonial space quickly from west to east. Sánchez (1980: 113) refers to the ceremony as 'cutting the threads', one the most emblematic actions in the ceremony.

<sup>251</sup> In Juktir some people refer to this place as Itchameet, similar to the Cora term Ychamet (Magriñá 2002: 242) or Chameet as people say in San Francisco de Ocotán (Rangel, 2008) and Santiago Teneraca. In the latter they call it Chameek too. This name corresponds to the place named Chametla in Spanish (probably with Náhuatl origin) on the Pacific coast of Sinaloa.

the Place of Death, in order to comfort them and send them to heaven in peace. In the following description I mainly adopt the healer's point of view during this practice, emphasising his role as an intermediary between living people, the souls of the dead, and the gods. In order to better understand this ceremony, I first present a general discussion on O'dam cosmology about the realm of the dead.

#### THE SOUL'S TRAIL AND THE PLACE OF DEATH

Among the O'dam there is no conception of a 'natural death'. Every death is the result of illness, which is an imbalance between humans and the gods, which always affects the human soul. Individuals can get to this delicate state, through their own reckless behaviour or through the intentional or unintentional act of a third party. The former situation is often expressed through different types of prayers offered as an excuse before the gods. While asking for their forgiveness and healing, an *umuagim* expresses the following example in his prayers.

O'dam	English
pui' jix chu lastimarixka'	it is a little hurt
oso ku alh alhi'ch pui' jix chu golpearixka'	it is a little hit
<i>lo que es el cuerpo,</i>	which is the body
gu' chi <i>mas bien,</i>	it means
alh'ch ja ñich pui' mo	that I did
pui' gai ma ti kiis	stepped wrong
alh'ch ja ñich pui' mañ ua'tulh	or I committed a small mistake
ja bui alh guch dudu'kam, jich gi'kora'	against our Sacred Parents
alh'ch ja ñich pui' ma mimi'iñ	thus, I burnt a little bit
alh di <i>dios i'mda'</i>	my God's soul
oso ku ñich alhi'ch pu'i ma ikorai'	or I got it dirty a little bit
oso ñich pui' ma tanarai	or put some rubbish
aixim bhan	in different ways
pero gu' dhi' bhan alhi'ch chi ba' pui' bar <i>seña</i>	and that little can be a signal
pero gu' añ pui' tu mai'	but I looked for it

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Thus, except for those direct references when people use a different word, I use Chameet here since it is a name recognized in all the communities.

Later in the same prayer the *umuagim* says:

O'dam	English
gu' añ cham jimdat mi' pix ja'k jup bhii <i>camino de la perdición</i>	walking I address myself in this way the way to perdition
no' ñich jimdat muja'k pix ji bus	the way to damnation
na pai' pui' ja'k jup ku gu jix kai' chio'ñ borda'	where the <i>mezcal</i> is
no' ñich alh pui' ji tu tanik alh ma'n <i>copa</i>	if I ask for a drink
pui' jiñ irab ji chibañdhak,	and then I put it down in my entrails
komoker ja ñich pui' mo ma tii	then I said something [bad]
komoker ja ñich pui' mo ma maltrataru <i>cualquier</i> <i>compadre</i>	and I hurt some compadre
<i>cualquier hermano, cualquiera que fuera</i>	some brother, anyone else
pui' bhan ja ñich ba' mo ma tu perderu	I am lost with that
<i>lo que es mi secreto, lo que es mis amores</i>	what my secret is, what my lovers are
no'ñich gu' jano' dir bhan dir pui' jix aferraru	if since then one I grasped it

(*Umuagim* from the Cumplido's kinship *xiotalh*, close to Ko'kolh kik, Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle, 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2011).

In contrast, when a third party intentionally inflicts damage, we can understand this situation as witchcraft.

When an individual becomes ill, the healer identifies the gods that must be pleased or cured. If the patient is in mortal danger, the *mamkagim* have to negotiate with the spirits and the gods through their prayers and their dreams to free the patient's soul. This process is described by many healers as a bureaucratic procedure, similar to searching for a lost calf and dealing with different authorities who must check receipts and payments. Often the negotiation becomes a fight between the healer and the pathogenic agents, thereby placing the healer himself in mortal danger. If the *makgim* succeed in the healing process they dream about bringing home the calf (Cf. Benítez 1980: 213) that follows the bell hanging from his arrows.

One asks the gods and dreams the cure: I dream of a soap bar, to wash the clothes which are the body, and life; I also dream of the amount of

money needed to buy the medicine for my patients.<sup>252</sup> The gods say how much the soap will cost. When the patient is too ill to eat, the healer must fast as a godfather [on the patient's behalf]. In his dreams, the healer searches along the road for a mattock, an axe, a mortar, a knife, a hammer, or a calf, which is hidden far away. One must ask around and try hard, to find the animal. If the animal is tied and soldiers appear, they are not soldiers but snakes, so ask if they have seen an animal pass. At the first check point they stop me and ask:

–What are you looking for?

I reply: – A bull

–Do you have the receipt? – They say. Then I answer, –yes, of course –, and they let me pass. The same thing happens at the second door, as well as at the third. But then they ask:

–How much do you have to pay with?

If I do not have enough money they will not free the bull. But if I do, they give me the bull with a receipt and we go back without any problems to the little animal's home. Then the patient will eat again [...]

(Healer Cesareo Morales in Reyes 2009: 55)

However, when an individual is ill, there is a point of no return for his/her soul, known as the '*raya término*', 'the end of the line'. It is said that once the soul has passed that point it becomes impossible to rescue it and the patient inevitably dies. Healers say that a soul can be in the Place of Death sometimes months before dying, a situation which makes rescue impossible.

O'dam language has two terms which refer to what they translate into Spanish as '*alma*', soul: *ii'mda'* and *kakoi'*. The former corresponds to the vital force that many human and non-human beings have. They say that when children are born, they come with their *ii'mda'* from heaven, the corn is *ii'mda'*, and many other plants and animals possess this quality. It is possible to make one's *ii'mda'* stronger such as fashioning *biñak* (Chapter 3) and participating in the *xiotalh*; the *ii'mda'* can leave the body while sleeping, especially while dreaming and there is always the risk that it will not return to the body; the physical manifestation is breath, also known as *ii'mda'* (Reyes 2009a: 54).<sup>253</sup> After the biological body dies,<sup>254</sup> the *ii'mda'* returns to heaven and what remains is the *kakoi*, the 'tortured spirit', which goes to the Place of Death and which a

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<sup>252</sup> The amount of money dreamed is the amount of money the healer requires for his services.

<sup>253</sup> This association is common among North American Indians. For example, for the Zuni the soul is associated with the head, the heart, and the breath (Bunzel 1932: 481).

<sup>254</sup> It is important to highlight the fact that 'death' refers to the biological functions of the body, given that the dead are still 'alive' as agents capable of action with social effects.

healer must rescue in order for it to find peaceful rest in heaven.

When an individual dies, the *kokprat* (Chapter 2) dresses the body in a white hood and sandals made from muslin, and covers the face with a flattened tassel of cotton. The relatives place the body on a woven *soyate* (a type of palm, *Brahea dulcis*) mat and watch over it for a night. They have to restrain tears or crying, under the threat of death, given the links with the deceased and because the deceased can miss their relatives and so take them with. When the body is taken to the graveyard, the relatives spread quicklime on the ground, where the body had lain, in the hope of finding clues about the cause of death upon their return. For instance, if they find mice tracks in the white powder, it is likely that the deceased suffered from *jix koxi* (Chapter 3); 'rain marks' indicate the individual died because of ritual debts. In any case, it is important for the relatives to identify the cause of death because this can be extended to them. In the graveyard, at the moment when they deposit the body into the ground, the relatives place themselves before the body facing eastwards ('the direction of life') with the body at their backs, in order to start cutting links with the dead relative and to prevent their own deaths.

After the biological death, the *kakoi'* starts its way to Chameet, the Place of Death, which is located on the Pacific coast in the state of Sinaloa. The journey is full of difficulties: it starts at the graveyard where Muki' dagim, the Lord of the Dead, indicates the soul's path to the west.<sup>255</sup> Every community has its own version regarding the different landmarks the souls pass on the way, but once passed the point known as The Dogs, on the bank of the Mezquital River, the following path is the same for all the O'dam.<sup>256</sup> On the river bank in the vicinity of Sihuacora, there are two dog-shaped stones, one dark, and one white. The former helps indigenous souls to cross the river while the latter helps mestizo souls.

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<sup>255</sup> In the graveyard in Juktir there is a standing stone representing this deity.

<sup>256</sup> On the other side of the river (from the perspective of O'dam communities) there are two routes, one short and one longer. I am describing here the latter (Reyes *et al.* 2015). Rangel (2008) documented the route from Kauxbilhim, San Francisco de Ocotán, and mentions that for the people of this community the path starts at Sihuacora, at the Dogs' Place.



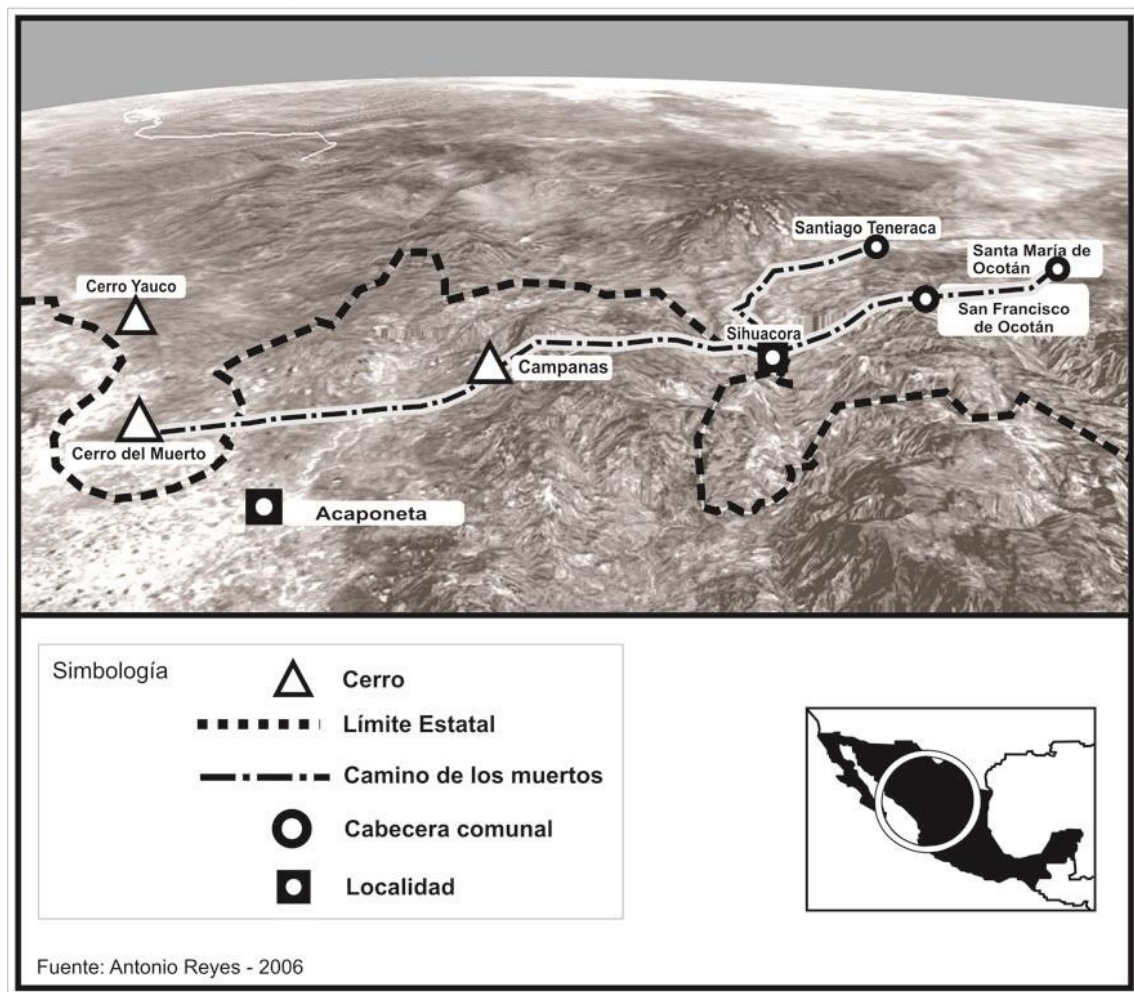
**Image 43 The Dogs, Sihuacora, Durango**

On the other side of the river, humans must pay for their sexual behaviour, especially for any abuses. It is said that every O'dam must have no more than five sexual partners during life. If they contravene this command, they will be punished here.<sup>257</sup> There is also a rock shaped like both male and female genitalia. As punishment, men must fornicate with this rock until it shatters and women must fellate the rock. In contrast, if a soul arrives which has not had sexual intercourse in life, the soul will be compensated with sexual relations in the afterlife. Later, along the way, the *kokkoi'* find the Crow's Place and the Tomatoes' Place. At the first place, crows reprimand the souls because they did not allow crows to eat in the fields; at the second place, the souls take provisions for the rest of the journey. Next, the souls find the Raccoons' Place, where souls are punished because of incestuous relations with their brothers and sisters. After this point, souls take a final shower before going to the Place of Death at *Kakoi' batiaa* (literally 'the soul's bath'). Then, there is 'The Jail'. Souls remain there up to five years in case they were not imprisoned in life. However, if the individual was jailed at least five times in life, that soul will be released immediately. There, in prison, the soul is made ready to go to Chameet (Rangel 2008: 53). Close to the coast of Sinaloa and Nayarit and

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<sup>257</sup> In the version recorded by Rangel (2008: 52), O'dam men must fulfil the expectation of having had five sexual partners, otherwise they will be punished in this place.

before leaving *la sierra*, there are The Bells, which ring when the souls pass by, like the bells at the church when the deceased is moved to the graveyard. Then, souls turn eastwards and have a last view of the world, ‘where everything looks beautiful’, and then, they finally go to Chameet.<sup>258</sup>



**Map 3 Route from the O'dam communities to Chameet**

The description of Chameet is of a place where the dead have a party and drink all the time, as Willett (2006) recorded:

Once upon a time there was a man who heard that one could sell cactus liquor at a good price in Chameet. So he bought a bunch of wine and went there to sell it.

After six days of travel he arrived at the coast and began to inquire after

<sup>258</sup> There are at least two landmarks which probably correspond to Chameet: the Cerro Yauco and the Cerro del Muerto (Cf. Rangel 2008; Cf. Reyes et al. 2015).

the place called Chameet. He was told that it was at the base of a hill with the same name, so he kept on walking since it was close by. When he got there, he thought to himself, "I might as well go ahead and see what it's like." It was already getting late when he got to the entrance and greeted the doorkeeper.

—Good afternoon, — he said to him.

—Good afternoon. What are you looking for? — The doorkeeper answered.

—Nothing, — the man replied. —I just came to see if you would give me permission to go in and sell a little cactus liquor—.

—Of course you can. Step right up, — the doorkeeper said and gave him a ticket to get in. —The only thing is that you shouldn't talk to anyone, — he warned him, —even if they greet you. If anyone speaks to you, don't answer them. Just put the liquor on the table, and when it's all gone, pick up the money and put out some more bottles.

—OK, fine, — the man said.

After he spoke to the doorkeeper, the man went to where he was staying and waited for nightfall. Then he loaded up his cactus liquor and went back. When he got close, he heard beautiful music being played like at a dance, and when he got to the door, he saw a lot of people inside dancing and shouting happily. So he went in and stood inside the door to watch. When the people saw him there, they began to greet him.

—Hello, grandson, — a woman said. —Hello, grandson, — a man said. —Hello, nephew, — a woman said, —Hello, nephew, — a man said. —Hello, lover, — a woman said. And so it went.

Although they greeted him in every possible way, the man remained silent like the doorkeeper had told him. He just filled the bottles with cactus liquor and put them on the table. Quickly the people grabbed up the bottles to drink the liquor, leaving their payment where the bottle was. While they were drinking, the music kept on blaring and the people kept on dancing without a break.

The man stood there and watched, but he didn't say anything to anyone. All he did was pick up the money, fill the bottles with liquor, and put them back on the table. When he looked back at the table after a minute, he saw that the bottles were already empty again and the money to pay for them had piled up again. So he picked up the money and filled the bottles. For a long time he kept selling the liquor like this, and in between he watched the people partying—some dancing, some shouting, and others talking while half-drunk. Every time he looked back at the table, the liquor had run out, and he had to pick up the money and put out another five or ten bottles. It went on like this all night, the music playing, the people dancing and enjoying themselves in various ways like any big party. The man just stood there watching and pocketing the money he made selling his cactus liquor.

Finally when the dawn broke, the liquor had run out, the liquor ran out, the light of the sun began to shine on the party, and the people began to disappear. After a while only a few were left, but soon there was nobody at all. All the man could hear was some owls hooting, some close by and some farther away. They hooted like owls sing:

"Tukuur, kuuku. Tukuur, kuuku."



That's all the man could hear was owls hooting, because all the people had disappeared. All that was left of them was their clothing, which was strewn around like rags.

After that the man left and went back to where he was staying, carrying all the money he had made selling the liquor. Afterwards, he went back home to his ranch, because he had sold all the liquor he brought on the first night.

This conception is similar to the Huichol idea of the Place of Death.<sup>259</sup> Chameet is located on the Pacific Coast where indigenous folk work on plantations belonging to the Mestizos and they spend much of the money earned in bars and brothels. Furthermore, in Cora this place name, Ychamet, means the Place of Liquor (Magriñá 2002: 242).

#### THE SOUL'S BANISHMENT CEREMONY

To hold the *jootos* ceremony, families normally meet in the deceased person's yard. As with other healing processes, the people directly involved must be present, not only the individual in body, but also in the form of an arrow known as *sakom* (Chapter 3); this is also the case for those *kokkoi'* involved. To this end, the bereaved relatives fashion the arrows on the *kokkoi'*s behalf. These are known as *jix jip u'uu*, 'cold arrows', and they are fashioned in the basic form by inserting a sharpened piece of wood (the foot) into a piece of bamboo (the body) and the blunt end is coloured green. In this way they are differentiated from the arrows used during the ritual by living people, which are coloured red, and designated as 'warm arrows'. During the ceremony cold arrows are placed on the surface of an altar specially erected on the western side of the ceremonial space. These altars are platforms identical to those used for *xiotalh* and other ceremonies where they are located on the eastern side. Beside their orientation, the main difference is that these platforms have a baldachin on the top, made with oak foliage for the placement of arrows and offerings. In addition, these platforms have a log with five steps crafted as a ladder to facilitate access to the top for both, humans and souls.

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<sup>259</sup> For the Huichol, the thousands of mosquitoes swarming on the coast are the souls of non-initiated people (Neurath 2011b: 214).

During the five days of the ceremony, the relatives attending come every morning, one by one or in groups, to see the *makgim* and plead for the salvation of the souls. They offer food for souls on the western altar three times a day: in the morning (before 9am), in the afternoon (between 1 and 2pm) and in the evening (between 5 and 7pm). After these meals, the healer performs what they call in Spanish *dar parte*, the dispatch, which is a prayer to intercede before the deities on behalf of the souls and the living relatives, and to convince the souls of the dead to go peacefully to heaven with God.

As with the prayers during the *xiotalh*, the healer opens the speech with the Christian formula 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost', establishes who their main interlocutors are, and the fact that the gods are omnipresent, they are able to see everything all over the world. In the particular example that I present here, the healer also reminds the gods that humans are their descendants.

O'dam	English
<i>Por la señal de la Santa Cruz, en nombre del Padre, del Hijo, Espíritu Santo.</i> Dios, ge' kam jix o' jix dhukam Jich Chat,	By the sign of the Holy Cross, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost God our powerful Father
ge' kam jix o' jix dhukam Jich Ñan	Our great holy blessed Mother
Na xib kat ba' pui' t̃i, jix chamam <i>puertas bhan</i> pui' ñio señor Santo San Pedro <i>que es portero del cielo</i> <i>que es portero de la Gloria</i> dho ma'n <i>parte</i> pui' mo bach t̃i, dho kup'pio'kix gux chamam puertas bhan	who at this moment, at the five gates they said in this way thus in this way spoke the lord Saint Peter who is heaven's porter who is Glory's porter on one side he saw us in that way because they are in the five opened gates
jix chamam <i>llave</i> ki'n jum <i>abriru</i> , jum kukpio [...]	they got opened with five keys [inaudible]
dhi <i>tres colores mexicanos</i> . pui' bhai' t̃ipich alh jum mamar, jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi', <i>todo nación, todo el mundo</i> pich pui' ja'k t̃i dho dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan. na pim pui' dhukat cham bia' <i>descanso</i>	those three Mexican colours there you saw them, your children, your blossoms, your offspring all nation, all the world, in this way you said it in the pleading that in that way it has no rest

<i>sea de día, sea de noche,</i>	whereas if it were day, whereas if it were night
pui' cham jum <i>olvidar</i> ja pim,	you do not forget
pui pui'ch nii'ñ ja pim pui'ch <i>pastorear</i> , na pim pui'ch kuidaru'.	you still shepherd us, still look after us
Dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	In this pleading

(Cesareo Morales, Biñikam, Santa María de Ocotán, 26 March 2012)<sup>260</sup>

It is said that healers can 'dispatch' by saying no more than five words while for others it can take up to three hours. There are people who prefer the latter given they need time during the ceremony to do other activities such as preparing the required meals, which is difficult if they have to devote time attending the prayers. In these prayers the healers address the tortured souls in order to comfort them and ask them to understand their own and their relatives' situation: the souls have to leave to stay with God and the living relatives must stay in the human world.

O'dam	English
<i>pobres angelitos, pobres penados</i>	poor boys, poor little angels
dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukat	it is for this reason
[...]	[...]
<i>este día, este mañana</i>	this day, this morning
nap ya' pui'p mati' gu jam arpus	here you see your little bag
napim alh pui'p xi kusbi	then you take it hanging with you
yaja'p pui'p bhiya' pim na pai' kik gu Xia'lhik kam	in order to go with God our Morning Father
Jich Chat	
gu xia'lhik kam Jich Ñan	Our Morning Mother
cha'pim bhan jum kejarut	do not complain about this
cha'pim ba' ku' jimmit	do not come back
cha'pim ba' suandat	do not cry
cha'pim ba' cualquier jup buidhat dhi Dios jam	do not disregard your God's soul
i'mda'	

## Appendix 2

<sup>260</sup> All the forthcoming references to the healer's 'dispatch' correspond to this prayer.

During the five days of the ceremony, the healer incorporates new elements into the prayers, following new participants or situations in the ceremony. For instance, in this ceremony, one of the participants asked the healer for protection for his car as well, and then the latter mentions this in his prayer.

On the afternoon of the fifth day before the dispatch, the healer performs one of the most emblematic actions of this ritual: 'cutting the threads' between the living and the dead. To this end, the *makgim* stretches a white cotton thread on a west-east axis, from the cold arrows impersonating the dead people on the western side of the ceremonial space, to living people and their warm arrows on the eastern side. Then, the healer literally cuts the thread with scissors. That night all the relatives wait together for the souls to arrive from Chameet, the Place of Death on the western side of the world. The souls enter the hollow of their cold arrows which are set on the western altar. The healer converses with the souls, hears their sorrows, and comforts them. If the ceremony is successful, the souls will leave peacefully eastwards to meet God in heaven.

When adults die two ceremonies have to be conducted: the *diligencias*, the errands, ideally six months after they pass away; and the *jootos* a year and five days after their death. For children under the age of five only the former is required. In addition, and differently from what happens to the souls of adults, the parents have the option to solicit God to send the soul back in the form of a new-born child. O'dam people state that such children are quite naughty and restless. In the particular case I present here, the parents decided to ask the healer to send their children's souls to stay with God and rest in heaven. However, since four of them died before they were born, it was necessary to baptise them before sending their souls to heaven. To this end, the parents had to choose godparents to name their children during the ceremony and then proceed with the *jootos*. Little children are easier to comfort than adults, as they only demand chocolate, milk, flowers, and water to peacefully leave. Nevertheless, the family wanted to offer a calf, which is usually the case when the ceremony is dedicated to the souls of adults.

On 8 March in 2012 a young man came to Juktir to see my *compadre* Cesareo Morales to ask for his services as a *makgim*, particularly as *jot'sadam*. He was looking for help to comfort the tormented souls or *kokkoi'* of five dead little children. The man informed Cesareo that he and his relatives had already started holding the required abstinences on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March and that they would like to start the *jootos* on the 21<sup>st</sup> of that month. They agreed to meet on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. This man came to collect my *compadre* one day to drive him to the place where he and his relatives would be performing the last part of the ceremony. On the stipulated day my *compadre* and I waited, but the man did not arrive until the next day in the afternoon. He informed us that everything was ready for the ceremony and he was willing to leave immediately; however, we decided to wait until the next morning, since it was already late and we had heard news about recent assaults in the surrounding area. The ceremony was dedicated to the souls of four children who were unborn, and for the soul of a child who died at the age of two months. In this case, the parents asked the healer to send their soul of their child to stay with God and rest in heaven.

In the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, the healer and I went from Juktir to a place named Biñikam, a hamlet belonging to the community of Santa María de Ocotán y Xoconoxtle. We arrived around 4pm, and then went to the place where the family was holding a retreat. Although it is not mandatory to perform *jootos* in isolation, and often these ceremonies take place in the dead person's yard, the family decided to be away from other people for privacy. Furthermore, they were making the most of the time holding abstinences and some family members were fashioning their ceremonial life-arrows known as *biñak* (Chapter 3). By this time, it was the last week of the retreat and therefore one is allowed to leave the shelter for a couple of hours if needed.

The place where they erected the shelters was approximately 1km away from the hamlet, northwards in the middle of a dense reforested pine forest. There, in a cleared space, they erected two *bopto'*, or altars, a day prior to our arrival. They were located approximately fifteen metres from one another along an east-west axis. To the north, three metres away from the centre of an imaginary line between the two altars, were four shelters. Constructed with

foliage, one was substantially smaller than the others and, according to the healer, this was where the 'cold arrows had been fasting' for the past week (Chapter 3); one of the other shelters was for the men, another for the women (northwards in relation to the men's shelter); and a fourth, located on the west side of the men's shelter, for the healer and his companion. Ten people were present, consisting of three married couples and their offspring: a young couple no older than 30 years, their ten year old son and their two year old daughter; a couple in their 40s with two daughters of eight and twelve years old; and an older couple in their late 40s or early 50s.

At the front legs of the eastern altar five clay cups are hung, corresponding to the *nabaich*<sup>261</sup> of those individuals who fashioned *biñak*: three at the northern leg belonged to the women and two at the southern leg to the men. On the top of the western altar there were five *jix jip u'uu*, cold arrows, vertically embedded along a south-north axis. Each of them corresponding to the soul of one of the dead children. From south to north, the first three arrows were girls' arrows and the last two were boys' arrows. As I have described before (Chapters 1 and 4), normally in ceremonial contexts the south is associated with men while the north with women (Reyes 2006a: 109, 117); nevertheless, this relation is inverted at western altars and in other issues relating to the realm of the dead. All the cold arrows had three green necklace beads attached, indicating the presence of the disease known as *jix koxi* (Chapter 3), which was probably the cause of death. From the ceiling of the baldachin hung five clay cups containing the *nabaich* for each soul associated with these arrows. Around the arrows were corn tortillas and flowers that the participants leave in the morning and afternoon as food for the souls.

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<sup>261</sup> The *nabaich* is a beverage, 'sacred liquor', prepared with small pieces of roasted agave submerged in water in a container, normally a clay cup. The cup is covered with a flattened fibre of a type of yucca (*iikob*) that is fastened by a cord alongside a type of *biñak*. By the term *nabaich* people refer to both, the liquid in the container and to the whole composition formed by all the items (chapters 1 and 3).



**Image 44 Western altar in the *jootos***

We arrived at the venue at 6:10pm. The forest was dense in that area and our shelter consisted merely of a barrier made with branches protecting us from easterly winds. Once there, the healer took his utensils out from a woven case and prepared himself for praying: he put his *buraa'* (healer's ceremonial woven band) around his head, took three feathered sticks known as *noonob*, and lit his pipe.<sup>262</sup> He went to the western altar and standing in front, holding the *noonob* and the pipe in his hands, pronounced a prayer for five minutes. At about 7pm, the women brought food to our shelter: white maize tortillas, green tomatoes, and water.<sup>263</sup>

The next morning, on the second day of the ceremony, we woke up around 6:30am and lit the fire in the shelter. One hour later a man came to our place in order to *uañdha'*, 'to supplicate' on behalf of their deceased children and their own behalf by addressing a prayer to the healer. A couple of minutes

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<sup>262</sup> It is common that healers have two *noonob* or sets of two, but this healer uses three (Chapter 3).

<sup>263</sup> It was only the healer's obligation to abstain himself from salty meals and fast until the evening, but I decided to do it as well, especially because to some extent the other people considered me as the healer's assistant.

later, two couples joined him. While praying and asking for the healer's help and for the good of their children's souls, I noticed that some of them made a significant effort to restrain their tears. When they finished praying, the five people went to their shelters and immediately came back, bringing a *sakom* (votive arrow, red in colour and topped with cotton) each, and handed these to the healer. One had green necklace beads attached too, which was an indication they were healing themselves from *jix koxi*: –there is so much fruit –, the *makgim* said while pointing out the beads.<sup>264</sup> He also mentioned this fact later in his prayer:

O'dam	English
<i>pobres niños, pobre angelito</i> nam mi'p tu'i'	poor children, poor little angels who are
<i>presente</i>	present here
ma'n nam pui' narankasi'	one which has oranges
pui' bax koxi', pui' bax dui am, pui' bax yakua,	already has <i>koxi'</i> , already has plums
pui' bax <i>refresco</i> am	already has mushrooms, already has soda <sup>265</sup>
pui' bax bhabho'mkoxi' am	already has squirrels
pui' bax chu'chu'p pi' am	already has chipmunks
pui' bax bapsikki' am	already has mice

## Appendix 2

The healer stuck the votive arrows in an agave leaf alongside his own ceremonial arrows. Then three children (two girls and a boy) gave the healer a *biñak* which their parents fashioned the day before for each of them. Then everyone, except for the healer and me, went to cut firewood, which they placed later alongside the rear legs of the western altar.

<sup>264</sup> Dreaming about fruit, particularly rotten fruit is a clear indication of this disease (Chapter 3). Healers say they 'eat' this fruit while healing.

<sup>265</sup> Flavored soft drinks, except for cola drinks, are considered to contain fruit, strongly associated to the *jix koxi'* disease.





**Image 45 Arrows of healer and patients**

At about 8:45am the healer put his *buraa'* on his head and one eagle tail feather on each side of his head fastened by the band. He went to the western altar and briefly prayed (for no more than five minutes) in front of it. Then, the women carried food to the western altar and everyone met there and to offer food to the cold arrows. One by one we put down five tortillas, *tuisap* (toasted ground corn), water –to which everyone contributed by squirting five times from a bottle in a pot – and flowers.

The *makgim* instructed the people to sit down on the floor in a line east-west, one behind the other, facing eastwards and turning their backs to the western altar. Right in front of the person ahead of the line, the healer put his ceremonial arrows embedded into an agave leaf alongside all the votive arrows he had received that morning. Southwards, alongside the arrows, he placed another agave leaf with those *biñak* the children had given him earlier. Holding a lit pipe and the *noonob* in his hands, the *makgim* took the *biñak* and walked along the southern side of the line, from the top on the eastern side to the bottom on the western side. While walking he moved the *noonob* side to side (east-west-east) over their heads wafting tobacco smoke. At the end of the line he went back to the eastern side and repeated the action walking westwards along the northern side of the line. At the end of the line he returned to the

starting point. While moving a third time westwards, he returned all the *biñak* to their owners. At the end of the line he took a sip of water from a plastic bottle and walking eastwards sprinkled the water over people's heads by blowing three times. Then he returned to the western end of the line, and standing facing eastwards he 'dispatched' for approximately half an hour.

After praying, the healer instructed people to stand up and they all went to the shelters. One of the married couples (in their 40's) came to see the healer at our shelter. They brought with them a *sakom* with paper money attached to the top and they *uañdha'*, 'supplanted' to the healer, and asked for particular healing that was different from the *jootos*. When they left, my *compadre* told me that it was not possible to heal the couple of anything unless they reconciled with each other first because, he said, they were upset with one another and this was a problem for the *jootos* ceremony as well. –How can God help them if they are not united? –, he said. Then another woman (the oldest one) also brought a *sakom* and gave it to the healer. She was there on behalf of her sons because, as she explained, one son no longer believed in God, and the other was not doing his best at school. The healer received the arrow and recommended she go to the church in Juktir as soon as possible and 'submit a claim' to Jesus Christ to make her son go to church. Later, in the afternoon, the *makgim* incorporated the new petitions in his prayer.

O'dam	English
alh ma'n <i>pobre tio</i>	Poor little uncle
[...]	[...]
ampix ba' pui'x tu bhata'	all is withered
ampix lastimarix	all is hurt
ampix ba' pui'x chu gibio'rix dhi Dios tu i'mda'	His God's souls are hit
ampix pui' jix chu ga'rix gu ja i'mda' nam mi tii mai' ti nii'n	his soul has been sold, it is for this reason what is happening
<i>pobres, pobres muchachos, pobre angelito.</i>	poor, poor little boys, poor little angel
na bhai' pai' pui' tii nai' <i>estudiar</i> am.	he is studying there (far away)
ma'n tii <i>estudiar</i> ,	one is studying
ma'n ba' mop tu juan,	one is working
ma'n ba' sap bhai' pix pu oiri, ku <i>nada</i> ampix	and another one is just there, wasting his time
ampix pui' jix o'n am,	been lazy

oso jam komoker sap xi kai'chit	they are only having arguments
sap komoker ja mit pu'ñi mam da'ngi	fighting
pui' ba' pix ji busañ nam cham jir jum jaja'nim.	they do not respect each other as brothers
nai' xim basilarut am	they are been disrespectful
komoker jam xim titid'dai	they say anything
a que mano	oh, brother!
ma'n parte bhan	in this prayer

## Appendix 2

At 1pm the healer gathered everyone to place the afternoon meals at the front of the western altar. The healer removed or reallocated former offerings. Then everyone contributed to filling plastic cups with water and *jiib* (*tuisap* mixed with water), as we had done in the morning. The healer took two clay bowls from the altar and holding one in each hand –one for the boys and one for the girls – each person put five small handfuls of *tuisap* in each cup. He returned the bowls to the altar, placing one at each side of the arrows (north and south). The healer put five corn tortillas topped with boiled white potatoes and smashed green tomatoes in front of the arrows. We all did the same and placed oranges on the altar as well. Lastly a man lit a candle on the southern side of the arrows.

The *makgim* pronounced a brief prayer (two or three minutes) at the altar and called everyone to sit along an east-west axis as in the morning. While doing so, the youngest adult man handed the healer three new arrows: one for his own healing, one for the protection of cattle, and one more for the protection of his car as the healer stated in the prayer:

O'dam	English
A gu' ma'n parte	On one hand
Up a' ma'n camioneta up bia'.	he has a truck
gu pobre persona, pobre ciudadano biñkada	the poor person, poor citizen, he made a <i>biñak</i> for it
mi' pup da gu biñakga'n gu troca	there is the car's <i>biñak</i> staying
jia gui' na bhan oir̃	the one (car) he uses to go on
na pui' kai'ch na sap jix ki' jimda'	to make it work well
chamtu' mas ka xi gakidha' ma'n aseit	to do not get dry of oil
oso ma'n cham xi gakidha' gu gasolin	to do not get dry of petrol
oso aceite de frenos	or breaks oil
dhi' pu'ñi kaidha' dho gu' ba biñkai je ma'n gu troca ga'n	that is what he is pleading for

na jix a' na sap jix ki' bhan oirida'	he wants to go well on it
na sap jix a' na jix ki' bhan paxiarda'	he wants to travel well on it
dhi'ñi dhi <i>cuenta</i> , ja'pane pir jum dukat bhan	on this account, for this reason
Ma tu a'gachich dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> up ora ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	We talked about it on its behalf here, in this prayer

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Once all the participants were seated, the healer walked in a similar way to earlier, moving east to west and with a lit pipe in his mouth on the way back all the time moving the arrows (his *noonob* and the votive arrows) side to side over their heads. This was done twice walking along each side of the line. He returned the arrows to their owners, took a bottle of water in his hands and instead of sprinkling water from his mouth (as in the morning) he squirted the water directly from the bottle onto the tops of their heads. Then, standing on the western side behind the people and facing eastwards he 'dispatched'. Following this everyone went for meals, except the healer and I who had a bottle of Pepsi. It was around 5:30pm when the women told us the food for the altar was ready and we placed food as we had in the afternoon. The *makgim* briefly (three minutes) prayed to the altar with his *buraa'* around his head and the *noonob* and the lit pipe in his hands. Then he returned to the shelter, sat on a stool and prayed the 'dispatch' to the arrows facing east. After that, around 6:15pm, we ate our meals: boiled potatoes, corn tortillas, *jiib*, roasted white onions, and water all of which was strictly served without salt.

The third day, 24<sup>th</sup> of March, we awoke around 7am and all the participants came to talk to the *makgim*. With comforting words, he told them what he dreamt that night. In his dreams, a black *charro*<sup>266</sup> riding a horse forced him to jump over a cliff. However, he jumped farther and, it was the horseman who fell instead. While listening to the *makgim's* account, one of the women restrained her tears and covered her mouth with her hand as a sign of her concern, since the healers' dream implied that there were dark forces interfering with his actions to rescue the children's souls from the Place of Death. Then the *makgim* told them how to follow the forthcoming steps in order to succeed in the ceremony.

<sup>266</sup> The classical image of the cowboy Mexican mestizo, very often associated with the devil, wearing boots and a hat, and sometimes portrayed riding a horse.

At 8:30am, while the women went to their shelter to bring the food to the altar, the healer wore his *buraa'*, and put two eagle feathers on each side of his head. He set the two agave leaves with all the arrows, side by side, approximately 6m east of the western altar: the votive and the healer's arrows on the northern side and the *biñak* on the southern side. The healer went to the western altar and, smoking his pipe, exhaled three dense puffs. Then, while he softly extended his right arm westwards, spreading the smoke in that direction using the feathers on the *noonob*. He said he was 'opening the path'. Women arrived with meals and all the participants gathered in front of the altar. The *makgim* removed the former offerings by refilling containers with water and *jiiib*. Women also put milk in two clay cups: one for the boys and one for the girls. The morning meal comprised: corn tortillas topped with beans, *tuisap*, oranges, candies, cartons of juice, and flowers. Moreover, on the altar women placed plastic bags with newly made clothing for the dead children; once again, a man lit a candle and set it on the altar. Following this, everyone went to collect firewood and set it along the rear legs of the altar.

In the meantime, the healer explained that all the items on the altar were for the tortured spirits of the children, that they were around 'like air', and that they would eat there the following night: 'tomorrow night we will call them, they will come from the west and we will send them eastwards, to be with God'. When people returned with the firewood, the healer called for the morning 'dispatch'. At the end of the prayer, he took all the arrows with him and placed them back in our shelter. We went back to the windbreak where he told me that he had forgotten to mention some gods during his prayer.

People started coming one by one to our shelter to 'supplicate' to the healer for his intervention before the gods. One woman brought in a plastic bag a skein of dark wool and gave it to the healer. Then another woman asked how much the healing was going to cost. The *makgim* answered that it would cost 10,000 Mexican pesos (approximately £500). She was surprised because this was too much. But the healer was joking and then said 3,000 Mexican pesos (approximately £150) was the price and that giving more was optional. Meanwhile, the men were trying to hunt a *bho'mkox*, grey squirrel (*Sciurus aureogaster*), which was wandering around in the tops of the trees. Two men

tried in vain to hit it with little stones using a slingshot. They also attempted to shoot it with a .22 calibre pistol but the four bullets proved useless as well. This continued for around an hour and they only stopped when the women called them to put the meals on the altar at 1:30pm. After that, the *makgim* called the participants for the 'dispatch'.

That afternoon while chatting in our shelter, the healer discreetly pointed out that the couple I mentioned before, the one dealing with problems, started talking to each other, –look at them – he told me while pointing them out with his lips, –they are they are reconciling, the woman looks more in the mood. They have to be okay to one another for their sons' welfare. Otherwise, how are they going to stand for them? –, he said. That evening one of the women's daughters arrived and joined the group. She was around 15 years old and attended high school in the town of Mezquital; she was the one her mother had been pleading for. Later the youngest adult man arrived with three dead squirrels -already roasted and skinned- and he put these on the top of the eastern altar. That evening the healer prayed in front of the arrows in our shelter. After that, we had boiled potatoes, onions, corn tortillas, and water for dinner.

On the morning of the fourth day we woke up at 7am. During the night my *compadre* dreamt about sandal straps:

–There were so many: darkish and yellow. That is good, that is so life for these people will walk forward.

Despite the good signs, he also saw in his dreams a length of barbed wire in his way.

–We have to cut it – he said.

He also dreamt that he almost slept with his wife, but he did not.

–There are spirits getting in our way and they do not want us to succeed, but we are not giving up – he said.

Around 8am, the recently arrived girl and her mother came to see the healer. He took three of the votive arrows (fashioned before by the mother) from the set

embedded with his own arrows and gave them to the girl. She softly touched her forehead, arms and legs with the arrows, and returned them to the healer. During the morning more people joined the family for the last two days of the ceremony: a couple in their 60s; the father of one of the women; and another man about 25 years of age.

At 8:30am the women went to the western altar and brought the food in baskets. The *makgim* took the two sets of arrows and set them eastwards in the opposite direction to the western altar. The healer cleaned the altar making space for the new meals. First the men and then the women put meals on the altar as before: tortillas topped with chunks of boiled *nopal* (*Cactacea opuntia*). The healer stuck an arrow in the ground approximately half a metre away from the altar. It was an arrow in the basic form made with the tip inserted in a piece of bamboo with no feathers or colour.<sup>267</sup> One by one, starting with the men and followed by the women, the participants stand before this arrow facing the western altar. There, the healer rubbed their bodies with a wad of dark wool, cleansing their backs and fronts, from their heads to their feet. Once each person was cleansed, they 'paid' Tobia'lhik, a personification of illness, by throwing a 50 cent coin (which is dark in colour) on the floor beside the arrow. The healer lumped the wool on the ground covering the arrow. He stuck another arrow on the northern side of the first one (leaving approximately 10cm between). This arrow is known as the 'order' for *jootos*,<sup>268</sup> and is light green in colour at the blunt end, with three distinctive elements attached: dark eagle feathers symmetrically cut and attached to two of its sides; a hanging hawk's tail feather; and five green necklace beads.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> There are two 'basic forms' for making arrows: a) a thin tree branch straightened and hardened on the fire. It has a sharpened end and a feathered blunt end; b) a sharpened piece of wood inserted into a piece of bamboo with a slot on the blunt end (Reyes 2010a: 272).

<sup>268</sup> Those healer's arrows fashioned to heal a particular disease are named 'order'. Then, there are order for *jix koxi*, order for *jootos*, order for *susto*, etc.

<sup>269</sup> The three items attached are related to the illness the healers are able to cure.



**Image 46 The Order for *jootos* and dark wool**

The *makgim* called for the participants to sit down for the 'dispatch' having, this time, the arrows, and the bunch of wool at their backs. Wearing his *buraa'* with an eagle feather fastened at each side of his head, he walked eastwards from a starting point before the western altar on the people's south side, smoking his pipe and moving the *noonob* side to side over their heads. Reaching the east side, he put the *noonob* on his head and took the feathers in his hands. He returned westwards walking along the northern side of the people blowing puffs of dense smoke from his mouth while energetically scrubbing the feathers on the people's sides from east to west. Arriving at the west side, the healer shook the feathers in the direction of the wool on the ground, as if throwing something away and then crushing it with his toe. He took the *noonob* in his hands again and while moving them over people's heads, he went back eastwards walking



on the northern side of the line. Then he went back westwards on the opposite side of the line with feathers in his hands. He completed six laps in total moving from west to east and back to the starting point again, changing at any time the side he walked on in relation to people. At the end, he took a bottle with water in his hands, pronounced a very short prayer (about one minute) and sprinkled the water from his mouth over people's heads.

Once again, he walked eastwards, moving the *noonob* side to side over people's heads, but this time he went as far as the eastern altar where he softly moved the *noonob* east and upwards towards the sky. On his way back, he collected all *biñak* from the agave leaf, where they had remained, and he returned these to their owners. He sat down on a stool in a space between the western altar and the two arrows embedded in the ground and started praying the 'dispatch'. He prayed for about 30 minutes. When finished, he stood up and walking eastwards on the south side of the people, he took the *biñak* from their owners. Then he walked westwards and eastwards again while moving the *noonob* and the *biñak* from side to side over people's heads. At the end he embedded the *biñak* and the *noonob* into the agave leaf and ordered everyone to stand. As everyone left, the healer stuck two hawk feathers along an east-west axis, transversal to that formed by the two arrows. He stuck a third feather in the middle, leaning to the feathered arrow. It was 9:40am.

Later in the morning the men shoved a wooden pole beside the northern front leg of the altar, used to hang the meat of the cow they would sacrifice later in the afternoon. At 1:30pm women approached the altar with food. Standing behind the healer 'opened the path' at the north side of the platform by moving the *noonob* west and upwards. Then, going back to the altar, he 'drew' a path in the air with the feathers attached to the *noonob*, ending the path at the cold arrows. He shook the *noonob* softly over the arrows, tinkling the little rattle dangling from them as a sign that he was leaving the souls there. He did the same through the southern side of the altar since 'boys and girls arrive at different sides'. He lit a candle on top of the platform under the baldachin, and pronounced a brief prayer. Then meals were offered on the altar.

The people sat down for the afternoon prayer. The *makgim* moved eastwards with a set of eagle feathers in his right hand moving them

energetically up and down, cleaning people's backs one by one, from their head to their waists. Then moving back to the west, he did the same thing passing the feathers in front of each person. After six laps he stopped and stood behind the people and faced east. He took a bottle of water, pronounced three or five words (that I could not hear), and sprinkled the liquid from his mouth over people's heads while walking eastwards along the south side. He returned to the end of the line and started walking eastwards again, but on the north side, spilling some water, directly from the bottle onto the top of people's heads. Then, holding his pipe in his left hand, feathers in his right hand and the *noonob* at his head, he sat down on a stool behind the people and the arrows stuck in the ground, and started praying. It was a brief prayer (five minutes) and then he hummed a tune for approximately two minutes.<sup>270</sup> Suddenly he stood up, took the wool from the floor and hastily moved westwards beyond the altar (about 30m), covered it with dry grass, lit a match, and burnt it. One minute later, he returned and cleansed people with feathers again on their backs and front sides. He took the *biñak* and with these he went westwards while moving them side by side over their heads; he returned eastwards touching each head with the cluster of feathers hanging from the *biñak*. Then he put the *biñak* back on the agave leaf and told the people they could stand. He took the agave leaves with his arrows from the ground and put them into a case. It was 2:40pm.

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<sup>270</sup> This intonation is performed with the mouth closed and air exhaled through the nose.



**Image 47** *Makgim Cesareo Morales dispatching during the jootos*

Approximately twenty minutes later, the men brought a calf and placed it on the ground, in front of the western altar with its head pointing westwards and its legs tied up pointing southwards.<sup>271</sup> Those calves used in the *jootos* must match the sex of the deceased recipients. Nevertheless, since these offerings are not required for children's *jootos*, it did not matter this time. The healer blew some tobacco smoke over the calf's head while moving the *noonob* from side to side in order to clean the air. Then, a man who arrived that morning killed the calf by stabbing a sharpened knife into the jugular vein. The healer caught the first blood that emerged from the calf's neck in two clay bowls and immediately proceeded to put them on the altar before the cold arrows. The men skinned and carved the calf and washed the entrails. They put the calf's head in a sack and placed it on the altar behind the arrows; then they hung three legs, the heart, and lungs from the top of the pole that they had secured that morning next to the northern side of the altar. They put the old tortillas in a sack and moved them to the back of the platform under the baldachin. That evening at 6pm, the meals for the souls were tortillas topped with boiled meat from the

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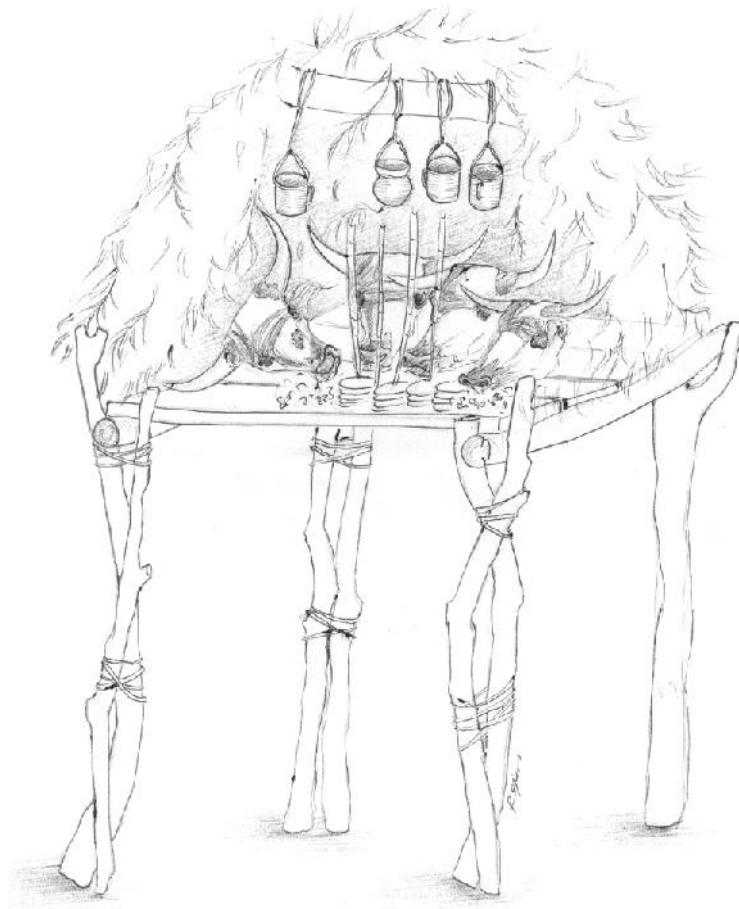
<sup>271</sup> This orientation is opposed to the sacrifices associated with solar and diurnal forces like those in church festivals (Chapter 2) and in the communal *xiotalh* where calves are placed with their heads pointing eastwards and their legs pointing northwards (Reyes 2006a: 115).

animal's ribs. At 6:30pm the healer prayed the dispatch in front of all the arrows in our shelter.

On the fifth day at 6am we prepared hot chocolate.<sup>272</sup> At 7:30am we all took a cup with chocolate topped with animal crackers and placed it on top of the eastern altar. Then every person who placed a *nabaich* clay cup at the eastern altar earlier in the week put a bundle of five small *títmaich* hanging next to these. Furthermore, each participant put a bundle of five regular *títmaich* on the top of that altar. We put chocolate on the western altar as well. Then the participants prepared the *bastimento*, 'provisions' for the soul's journey. To this end, the women made up a set of five small bags (15cm long by 10cm wide) with white homespun muslin. All of us contributed to filling them with five corn kernels, a small handful of tiny corn tortillas (like raisins in size), raw *tuisap* (ground raw corn grains), small pieces of cooked shredded meat, a handful of raw beans, powdered chocolate, and raw pumpkin seeds. Amaranth was required as well, but it was scarce at this time. The healer placed one full bag before each cold arrow. In addition, the parents placed little corn dough animals such as two horses with their saddles (8cm high by 15cm long) and three dogs (5cm high by 10cm long) made by the arrows. My *compadre* explained to me later that the horses were to help the souls carry their provisions and the dogs would look after them on their way. Then we put the morning meals on the altar: water, *jilib*, tortillas with meat, and flowers. After this, the participants went to collect firewood.

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<sup>272</sup> The O'dam rarely drink chocolate outside ceremonial contexts and they always prepare it by melting dark chocolate bars in hot water and sugar, but never with milk.



**Image 48 Calves' heads on the *jootos* altar<sup>273</sup>**

The healer placed the agave leaves with all the arrows stuck into them on the eastern side, approximately 6m away from the western altar. Before each set of arrows (westwards) he placed a clay bowl and then sat down on a stool in front of these. Those individuals who hired the *makgim* went and deposited \$3,500 Mexican pesos (around £175) there. Additionally, each individual puts a small tassel of cotton in the other bowl and 'paid for life' in the money bowl with a 'white' (silvery) coin. The cotton is normally used by the *mamkagim* for spinning a thread to use later in the ceremony. However, this time the healer was prepared, having the thread already rolled on a stick. The participants sat down

<sup>273</sup> This image is based on the *jootos* I registered in the communal *xiotalh* patio in Chianarkam in 2007. Different from the ceremony that I present here, in Chianarkam the calves' heads were exhibited on the altar as it is shown in this image.

in a line for their 'cleansing' and the 'dispatch'. At this time, as well as in the afternoon during the speech, the healer emphasised his petitions to the tortured souls, pleading with them to come happily from the western side of the world, to accept the offerings, and to go peacefully eastwards to stay with God:

O'dam	English
ap nap jir bipi' kam	you who were the first passing away
<i>pobre niño, pobre angelito, pobre alma penada</i>	poor child, poor little angel, poor tortured soul
na mit alh jum soi'ntai	they gave you a calf
ma'n alh sai' ipoñ pui' tajañi'ñ	a little animal which eats grass
nap ba' gu' bipi' pui'p xi buaji	to take it away with you
nap ba' ki'n pui' jix jikgidha'.	to happily go with it
bipi'dha' pim, ma'n <i>parte</i> dhi jam jaaduñ,	take it and shepherd it alongside your brothers
nap ja bim pui' jimchu'	
dhi' bix dhi <i>ambos</i> bhan ja pim	all of you go taking care of it
pui' kuidartun'da',	

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In other sections he mentioned:

O'dam	English
Na mit ba' ba jam kua'ñxi	They already warmed a <i>taco</i>
mi' ba' ji'ma'n <i>taco</i> pim xi chu jugai	for this reason, on one hand, on this account
dhi' pim ji'man timkalh ki'n xi chu jugai	there is a <i>taco</i> for each of you, for eating it
ba' pu'ñip dukam, ma'n <i>parte</i> , dhi'ñi <i>cuenta</i>	there you eat a tortilla, each of you,
na pim pui' xi chu jugai,	to eat there at about five, at about six
<i>con ánimo, con cariño, con amistad</i>	with spirit, with affection, with friendship
cha'pim jax jum agat	do not worry
na gu' cham tu' dhim gi'kora'	because your parents
chamtu' na mit mupai' jam tut'tu	do not abandon you there
jax chu'm bapoicha'm	on the path
jax chu'm <i>carretera</i>	on the road
jax chu'm gio'ntir	on the plains
jax chu'm u'xchir	on the forest
jax chu'm jodaichir	on some rocky place
jax chu'm alh inpiernos bhan	in some hells

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The healer also told the souls that they would not be allowed to be around their

parents and relatives anymore:

O'dam	English
Na gu' chi api'm mi'ja'k up bhiya' je <i>abajo la tierra</i>	Perhaps you will go down the earth
dhi' pui' jir jum dukam	for this reason
cham ka jai'ch <i>permiso</i> , cham ka jai'ch <i>licencia</i> na pim ya'pai' ka ja kobxi'ñdha' dhi jam gi'kora'	there is no permission anymore, there is no license to prowl your parents
<i>porqué</i> na mit ya' ba ji tanok, ya' ba ji bhio'mo, ma ji sufrirumit	because they start getting thirsty getting hungry, they started suffering
ma ji ua'mamit alh dhi jam gi'kora api'm jam <i>cuenta</i> ,	your parents are getting hunger because of you
<i>pobres niños almas penados</i>	poor children tortured souls
dhi' ba' pu'ñi pim alh xi pensarui <i>este día, este mañana</i> ,	so think about it this day, this morning
e gu' dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	in this prayer

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The healer also pleaded with the gods to happily receive the souls in heaven, particularly with Alhi Dagim Jich Chat, associated with Saint Joseph, the Lord who send children to the world of humans and who would receive them back in heaven.

O'dam	English
<i>Por ahí está parado</i> Nuestro Padre Alhi Dagim Jich Chat	There is standing up Our Father Alhi Dagim Our Father
<i>allá está arriba</i> Nuestro Padre Alhi Dagim	there is up there Our little Alh Dagim
<i>mejor recibe a tus hijos</i>	better if you receive your children
Santo Refugio, María Santísima	Our Lady of Refuge, Holy Mary
<i>que recibas a tus hijos, tus retoños, tus descendientes</i>	receive your children, your blossoms, your offspring
<i>porque ya no van a hacer eso</i>	because they are not going to do that anymore
<i>ya no van a tomar cariño a sus padres</i>	they will not feel affection to their parents anymore
<i>porque ya está difícil</i>	because it is complicated now

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The healer finished his prayer at 9:30am. He sat down on the stool alongside all the arrows facing westwards and called the participants to sit down on the ground in front of him: men on the southern side, women on the northern side. He told them that everything was going well, that he was still dreaming about sandals and that it was a good sign. He told the young man that even though everything was going well, he still felt angry and that it was an obstacle to managing the welfare of his family. The *makgim* recommended he see a healer again afterwards, to get help for himself, his wife and his children. Then all of them in unison *uañdha'*, supplicated, for approximately five minutes.

When they finished praying, the healer and I went to our shelter. Once there, he discreetly pointed out that one of the couples were getting along better with one another, and that they were chatting more often and more kindly to one another. The wife of the couple came to our shelter to pay the healer for his services on behalf of her sons. The healer told her that it was important to pray for them in church and that it was very important to be accompanied by her husband. She promised to do this. Later that morning, the man from the young couple came to our shelter and asked me to be the godfather of their dead children by giving them names later in the ceremony. I accepted.

That afternoon, before meals are put on the altar, the healer set out his ceremonial arrows, separating his personal arrows from the participants' votive arrows. He set his own arrows longitudinally on one side of the agave leaf while setting the votive arrows longitudinally on the other side, and leaving a space between them at the centre of the leaf.





**Image 49 The healer's and the patients' arrows**

At 2pm the healer called everyone to place meals on the western altar. After this, the *makgim* set out the two agave leaves again with all the ceremonial arrows on the eastern side. The participants sat down in front of the arrows facing eastwards as during the 'dispatch'. The *makgim* took the cold arrows from the western altar and stuck them in the ground in front of the platform in the same place that he had stuck his own arrows the previous day. He set them by putting the arrows corresponding to the girls on the southern side in relation to those corresponding to the boys. No more than 5cm westwards, in front of the arrows, he stuck 'the order of *jootos*', an arrow with dark eagle feathers already described. The *makgim* tied a cotton thread around the cold arrows and 'the order' forming a triangle. From there, he pulled out the thread, passing it over people's heads and tying it to the votive arrows on the eastern end of the line.



**Image 50 The cold arrows and the order of *jootos***

Wearing his *buraa'* and holding a lit pipe in his hand, the healer moved five times from east to west and gently touched everyone's head with the feathers of the *noonob*. Then, moving westwards on the north side of the line, he moved the *noonob* from side to side over their heads. On the fourth time he stopped beside me (I was observing, sitting behind everyone on the left of the altar) and he blew tobacco smoke at the top of my head since I needed to be protected as well, then he continued doing the same with the rest of the people. The fifth time he took the bottle with water and moved eastwards while blowing tobacco smoke at the tops of people's heads (including myself) and sprinkled some water from his mouth while returning westwards.



**Image 51 People, arrows, and the stretched line of life**

Standing behind all the people, the healer prayed for approximately ten minutes. Then he cut the thread at the end closest to the cold arrows. He buried the remaining end of thread, still attached to the cold arrows next to their tips. -They will live there-, he said, referring to part of the illness affecting people. Walking eastwards, he kept the thread taut while folding it into sections of around 30cm.<sup>274</sup> When he reached the eastern side of the line, he twisted all the threads together, resulting in a single rope. He sucked on it energetically, spat on one of his hands, and rubbed them together.<sup>275</sup> He did this five or six times. Then he went westwards to the cold arrows and 'sucked them' too using his *noonob* as a straw, by putting its feathered end in his mouth and the sharpened end at the top of the cold arrows. He did this to each arrow and then at the tops of the heads of everyone sitting in the line. When he finished, he moved back westwards to the end of the line. Once there, he went eastwards while putting the white cotton rope around our necks, checking if it was long enough to hang loosely around the neck.<sup>276</sup> He put the rope close to his mouth, sucked it, and

<sup>274</sup> There are healers who do this by folding the thread around their forearms.

<sup>275</sup> It is possible that the healer is extracting the *jix koxi* and then throwing it out of his mouth (Cf. Lumholtz (1904 [1902]: 468).

<sup>276</sup> Lumholtz (1904 [1902]: 470) and Sánchez (1980: 113) documented that after the ceremony people used to wear a cotton thread around their necks as a sign of already 'been cut'. I have never seen this.

then spat on the floor. Starting on the eastern side of the line, the healer touched each person's chest with the white rope and sucked on it, as if extracting something from each person with the help of the rope.

The healer asked a woman and myself to stand and approach the cold arrows in order to baptise the unborn deceased children. She was going to be the godmother of two of them while I was going to be the godfather of the other two. There was a fifth arrow, but it belonged to a child who had died after being born and baptised. Using a small tassel of damp cotton, we touched each arrow while uttering the words 'I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, with the name of...' saying the names we chose for each. We lit a candle for each and placed them beside the corresponding arrow. We then returned to sit with the group.

The healer extracted the bamboo mouthpiece from his pipe and moved from west to east touching our foreheads with the internal end, which is normally inside the pipe. He repeated the process, but this time touching with the sharpened end of his *noonob* and making the mark of a cross. In the end he passed twice more moving the *noonob* from side to side over our heads. Everyone stood and my new *compadres* and I greeted each other as *compadres* (Chapter 2). When my new *compadres* went to their shelters the healer approached me and said –the souls will run through this way tonight – while pointing out the west-east axis, where people had been sitting earlier and where the healer had tended the threads. He explained to me that the children would arrive from the western side and that we would be sending them eastwards. He said: 'they will pass very fast, they are like the wind, and they are leaving fast like arrows'. Later in our shelter, the healer separated the votive arrows into two sets. One set, he tied the votive arrows topped with cotton and paper money and then put the arrows away in his arrow case since they were not needed anymore. In the other set he kept eight arrows topped with cotton, green (bluish) necklace beads –related to *jix koxi* –, as well as coins attached to the shaft wrapped in a piece of white fabric. These remained stuck onto an agave leaf.

The *makgim* and I were chatting in the shelter when unexpectedly, he put the sharpened end of his *noonob* in his right ear, addressing the feathered end

westwards, and using this like a hearing device: He said, –I can hear the souls talking to each other. They say they are coming tonight, they are happy, one is even dancing, and another asks if there is food for them –. He mentioned that souls sound like flying mosquitoes, like buzzing air, and it is not always easy to understand what they are saying. The healer approached the western altar to 'open the path' with tobacco smoke. He went westwards, about 10m beyond the altar, and put the *noonob* close to his ears again in order to hear the souls. He told me they said they were going to come at dawn, at sunrise. –In Chameet they say this the other way round. So when there is sunrise there is sunset, – he said.

At 6:30pm we put meals on the western altar: meat and tortillas in glass and plastic bowls.<sup>277</sup> A man lit a candle and put it beside the food. At about 7:15pm, when the healer and I were in the shelter, he put his *noonob* close to his ears again and he said –they are coming. They are coming up the road by Huajicori –.<sup>278</sup> The *makgim* stood up and went to the western altar. All the participants gathered there: men at the southern side of the altar and women at the northern side. The *makgim* instructed them to make flowered paths, putting three flowers on the ground on each side of the altar along a west-east axis. Men did this on the southern side and women on the northern side. Holding his lit pipe in his left hand, the *makgim* moved beyond the altar on the northern side. On the way back to the front of the altar, he extended his right arm holding the *noonob* in his hand with their feathers floating in the air. By doing this, he led one of the souls through the flowered path to one of the cold arrows on the altar. He did this twice on the northern side of the altar, bringing two boys' souls. Then he did the same three times on the south side leading the souls of the girls to their cold arrows.

It was around 7:40pm and we were in half-light. Despite the lit candle on the altar, it was difficult to observe all the actions going on, or the facial expressions of others. This was the most solemn moment of the ceremony and everyone was absolutely quiet. The healer approached close to the altar and

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<sup>277</sup> In this case glassware was considered more elegant and appropriated to honour the tormented souls.

<sup>278</sup> The village of Huajicori in the state of Nayarit, close to the Pacific coast and to the Place of Death, and where the road starts to ascend from the coast to *la sierra*.



the rest of the people stayed behind him. Then, he started talking with the souls. I was the most distant from the altar and the conversation, and I only heard the healer producing a sound with his closed mouth and the expulsion of air through his nose, assenting to what the children said: 'mmhhh'. The healer apologised to the souls because the food and the offerings were very modest: –please forgive us poor children, poor little angels – he told them. He talked with them for about ten minutes and sometimes comforted them saying *¡ah que caray!* what a shame! as if they were expressing their grief and scarcities. While doing so, the healer unexpectedly asked the children's parents for a pair of cowhide straps, and one of the men handed them over immediately. Speaking to the souls, the healer assured them that the horses were docile.<sup>279</sup> Then stepping on the ladder at the altar, he approached the arrows and took the bags with provisions with him. He went down and, smoking his pipe, walked eastwards and was lost in the darkness of the forest. When he returned, a couple of minutes later, he no longer had the bags with him, since he had left them hanging from a tree branch some 50m east.

When he returned, close to the western altar, he asked the participants to stand in a line facing eastwards. He stepped on the ladder and took the five hanging *nabaich* cups from the baldachin on the altar.<sup>280</sup> He walked eastwards on the southern side of the line with the cups in his left hand while sprinkling the liquid over us using little strips of yucca as a sprinkler (Chapter 1). He repeated this five times, alternating the sides and taking the liquid from a different recipient each time. At the end of the last route, he kept walking to the east, carrying the cups with him and hanging them from the front legs of the eastern altar. Then we broke ranks.

When the *makgim* returned, he asked for the children's godfather and godmother (me and a woman) to light a candle for each child who was baptised that morning. We had four candles, but the *makgim* instructed us to light only two and save the others for later and to keep an eye on them, in order to keep a

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<sup>279</sup> He told me later that one of the souls told him the horse seemed a brute.

<sup>280</sup> This *nabaich* is the counterpart of those normally placed on eastern altars, as in the *xiothalh* (Chapter 1) and in this particular ceremony where people are fashioning *biñak*. Both types of *nabaich* are clearly related to their initiation either as a person in the case of the *xiothalh*, as an ancestor in the case of the *jootos* (Reyes 2010a: 277).

candle burning during the night. We set the candles on the altar, where a previous lit candle was still burning. We went to our shelter to get some rest, although I stayed awake watching over the candle. Once in the shelter, the healer told me that children's souls leave fast and easy, because 'they are like pure and clean water flowing in the river'. During the night, while men slept the women cooked *junma'n* (a mixture of squirrel meat with corn dough) for the next day.

The next morning we woke up at 5am and lit the fire for warmth. Fifteen minutes later, all the participants gathered in front of the eastern altar where the men sat on the south side and women on the northern side. We were four men: the two fathers undertaking the ceremony for their children's souls; the ten year old boy, a son of one of them; and myself. There were five women: two mothers of the deceased children and three of their daughters. The men sat in front of the altar, one beside the other, along a north-south axis; and the women did the same in a line oriented east-west. The healer stood in the middle in front of us, facing eastwards, and holding his *noonob* he prayed for about twenty minutes. When he finished, he approached the altar and took the five *nabaich* hanging cups and five woven crowns named *si'lhik* (Chapter 3). He took a sprinkler from one of the cups, and with it he superficially brushed our heads, from the centre at the top, in four directions: to the front, to the back, to the right side, and to the left side. While doing this, he acted as if he were extracting lice and then killing them with his thumbnails. He did this with everyone and then he put the *si'lhik* crowns on the heads of those who had fashioned *biñak* earlier that week: three women and two men. Then, one by one and starting with the women, using the sprinkler, the healer put five sips of the liquid contained in the *nabaich* in our mouths. When he finished, he returned the cups to the altar. Following this, he fed us by hand, one by one a bite of *timaich*, a bite of roasted squirrel, and a pinch of salt into our mouths. He gave us five portions of food one after the other. Then we stood and went to our windbreaks.

Later, at 7am, the *makgim* prepared himself and his ritual instruments, and called the participants to sit before the altar for the prayers. Only eight people attended, the dead children's closest relatives. This final time, the healer's actions were faster than before. He walked along the lines a couple of

times smoking tobacco and moving the *noonob* from side to side. He pronounced a short prayer (five minutes) to thank the gods positioning himself behind them and then, starting with the last person at the rear, he marked a cross on their foreheads using the sharpened end of one of his *noonob* and ashes from the bowl of his pipe, similar to the ash crosses of Ash Wednesday. After he reached the first person in line (last in order) everyone stood and followed the healer to our shelter. There, the *makgim* talked to them for the last time and reiterated that it was important to be united in order to succeed in their pleas. Then, everyone thanked him.

Around 8am, we went to the western altar and the healer shared out all the meals and offerings that remained there. Everyone had a cup of cold, thick chocolate (with soaked crackers). As compensation, the healer received the calf's head and two haunches, as well as two full sacks of hardened tortillas. Once the altar was cleared, the men dismantled it immediately. They put all flowers on a piece of cloth and the healer exhaled some tobacco smoke over them while moving the *noonob* over them from side to side. They wrapped the flowers and left them at the eastern extreme of that place, where the healer had left the bags with the soul's provisions the previous night. On the way back, they looked and sounded happy. A minute later, when they returned, the healer said –now, we have finished–. We remained there for a couple of hours eating meat, *timaich*, tortillas and *junma'n* for breakfast. This was the first salty food the healer and I had eaten during that week. Other relatives who were not there before, joined us for the meal. My *compadre* told me that when people come to eat after a ceremony, they are actually helping others to eat or consume their 'sins'. So it is important to finish all the food.

It was 10am on 27<sup>th</sup> of March when we departed from that place. All the people walked with us to the hamlet. There, they walked counter clockwise around us, completing five laps. We said goodbye, and I especially wished farewell to my new *compadres*. Once we were walking alone, my *compadre* told me he was very happy because he felt that indeed, those little angels had arrived safe and sound at their destination.



## CONCLUSION

The *mamkagim* are privileged intermediaries between humans, spirits, and gods. In this character, they have the ability to negotiate between the realms of humans and non-humans (more than having a given power over them). In contrast with the *xiotalh* leaders, the *mamkagim* deal with beings that are more dangerous, and forces which are capable of inflicting damage, cause illness and provoke death.<sup>281</sup> As I described in Chapter 3, the *mamkagim* are born with the potential capacity to relate with those powerful and 'delicate' non-human beings. There are different types of healers, according with the different types of gods and spirits that they are able to negotiate with. In the particular case I approach in this chapter, the healer is dealing with gods and spirits of life and death, one being the counterpart or counter aspect of the other.

The *jootos* ceremony, its execution, and the prayers that the *joot'sodam* pronounces, inform us of many aspects of O'dam cosmology. Through this we can observe a life-death life continuum, and the classification of different aspects of the world under this basic distinction. The western side of the ceremonial space corresponds to the western side of the world, in the same way as described in Chapter 4 for the *xiotalh* patio. This side, where many of the ritual actions take place during the *jootos*, corresponds to the direction of the sunset, the darkness, the dead. In opposition, the east is the direction of the sunrise, the light, and life. In this continuum, living people place themselves midway, between two types of ancestors.

In this regard, in his speech, the healer explicitly defines the identity of many deities from the western side, beings that he and the other humans relate to during the ceremony. Thus, he makes explicit his communication with Muki'dagim, the Lord of the Dead, and with other deities from the realm of the dead, in order to release the souls from Place of Death:

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<sup>281</sup> Gods from the *xiotalh* patio can inflict minor damage as a sign of the behaviour of reckless people fulfilling their duties with them. However, it is unlikely that they place people in mortal danger.

O'dam	English
gu ma'n tiempo, dhi gok, dhi baik, makob, jix chaman	one time, two, three, four, five
<i>miles de ocasiones</i>	thousands of times
<i>presente</i> , ma tu prendiaru,	there, (s)he pawned [the soul]
oso kut ma ima gu Muki' dagim	perhaps to Muki' dagim
oso kut ma ima gu <i>calavera</i>	perhaps to the skull
oso kut ma ima gu <i>chamuco</i>	perhaps to the devil
ba' pui' jir jum dukam, dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	that is the reason, on side
oso pu'ñi mam ikorai mit jia	or perhaps they got it dirty
ku ba' gu xi', ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	it is for that reason, in this prayer

## Appendix 2

In regards to other 'western-sunset' gods, he mentions while addressing the souls:

O'dam	English
nañ pai' dhuk ya'ni jam bañio'ra'	when I call you with my hand
jix jiki' bhan na pim bhai' pu ti ti'mpo'	you come happily to see
ya'ni dir ja'k ja pim bha bhiya' na pai' kik	to come from the place where Our
gu Jurnip kam jich Soi'kam	Humble Father of the Sunset is
	standing up
Jurnip kam Jich Chat	Our Humble Father of the Sunset
dhi' bhai' pui' jam makia <i>permiso</i> na pim	thus he will allow you to come and
bhai' xi chi ti'mpoi dhi'ñi <i>horas</i> bhan.	see at that time

## Appendix 2

Once the healer negotiates for the souls' release with the western forces of the sunset, he addresses the lords of life, pleading with them to accept the souls in heaven. He alludes to them here as Our Lords of Sunrise, and they are both native and Christian gods:

O'dam	English
<i>mejor</i> nap ja resiburu'	better you embrace them
dhi jam tat, jam nan	their father, their mother
ya' na pai' kik gu Xia'lhik kam Jich chat	here where Our Lord of Sunrise is
	standing up
gu Xia'lhik kam Jich ñan	Our Mother of Sunrise
<i>mejor</i> jap ja resiburu' dhim mamar	better you embrace your children

dhim su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	your blossoms, your offspring
dhi' ja'paneñ mop kaidha' dhi oras	that is what I am asking for at this
bhan.	moment

## Appendix 2

The healer as an intermediary has to be a master of the discourse and dreams. Through the latter, the healer has access to know both the origin of the afflictions as well as their cure. Through the former, the healer sets an explicit relation between all the beings involved in the process and makes orally explicit their pleadings and negotiations. Dream telling is a common practice among people living in the same household. But not all dreams are important in the same way and many are meaningless while others have to be interpreted in their particular contexts (Reyes 2009a).<sup>282</sup> However, there is common ground about which dreams are indicative of danger and when one individual must go and see a *makgim*. But people do not tell their dreams to the healers in the first place, and the latter have to demonstrate their power by finding out the cause of the affliction in their own dreams.<sup>283</sup>

As masters of oratory, the *mamkagim* act as 'enunciators'. They are capable 'of producing an efficient linguistic expression in a certain time and context after all, which heal or damage us from words is who pronounced them and in which context' (Romero 2011a: 45). Their authority rests on the quality of their linguistic action, 'the shaman [...] is matter [...] and this is achieved through discourse in which the audience is an essential partner' (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 10). It is worth mentioning that many people I have talked with say that they rarely pay attention to the words the *mamkagim* utters. However, they expect to hear the healer speaking on their behalf in their prayers. Consequently, healers must be capable of incorporating those situations during

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<sup>282</sup> For instance, dreaming of drunk people in the context of the *xiotalh* ceremony is a clear premonition of the rains. Tedlock (2003: 103) draws our attention to that while dreams are private mental acts, which have never been recorded during their actual occurrence, dream accounts are public social performances taking place after the experience of dreaming (Tedlock 2003: 103). Therefore, recently anthropologists have oriented their attention towards the study of contexts. For them, dream telling and dream sharing are 'communicative events' (Tedlock 1987: 23; 2003: 103).

<sup>283</sup> The situation I describe in Chapter 3, where the healer novice and I told the healer our dreams every morning, is slightly different. In such ceremonies, the *mamkagim* in charge act as 'godfathers' or as 'godmothers', and have to be someone the patients trust.

their speeches, transforming their words, not only in vehicles of communication with the gods, but the evidence of this fact as well.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> While describing a 'soul's sending off ceremony' among Cora people Jáuregui and Magriñá (2013: 192) contend that the officiant can perform the ceremony silently and that this is coherent with the 'Cora magical way of thinking' formulated by Preuss (1998: 327-332). This author supports that 'there is a conception which attributes magical powers to thoughts themselves (Preuss 1998: 328).

## Conclusion to Part II

In this section, I described three different types of intermediaries in the relationship between humans and the deified ancestors, the gods, and the spirits. Each group of specialists have their own scope of action and, in principal, they have different types of interlocutors. In this conclusion, I pay attention to these sets of specialists, attending to their similarities and mainly to their differences. On one hand, there is an important contrast between the *xiotalh* leaders and the *mamkagim*. On the other hand, there is an opposition between these two accomplished mediators, already considered as living ancestors, and the courthouse officers who are on their way to becoming ancestralised.

As I suggested in the introduction to this section, from a starting point these two specialists could be referred to as 'shamans', reminiscent of 'dual shamanism' otherwise common in Amazonian societies (Crocker 1985: 313). But the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' refer to a wide range of specialists (Descola 2012: 51; Hultkrantz 2007 [1993]; Vitebsky 2001: 10), telling us very little about concrete cases. Furthermore, the non-critical application of the term 'shaman' would eclipse the O'dam distinction of naming each type of specialist differently. The distinction that the O'dam set between the *xiotalh* leaders and the *mamkagim* is more similar to that distinction between 'priest' and 'shamans', the latter possessing a more limited definition.<sup>285</sup> As 'priest' the *xiotalh* leaders are ritual directors of a well-delimited set of ceremonies, carried out in specific ceremonial centres based on a ceremonial calendar (Cf. Lesa and Vogt 1965: 45). Conversely, the *mamkagim* 'shamanic' rituals are not based on any calendar and they are mainly addressed to heal an individual or a limited group of people (Cf. Lesa and Vogt 1965: 45; Turner 1968); they can perform almost everywhere, even far away from their communities, as is the case for those healers working in the cities.

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<sup>285</sup> The distinction made by Hugh-Jones between (1996: 35) 'vertical' and 'horizontal' shamans is based on the same principle.

But even this distinction is schematic for this ethnographic case, it has to be taken as a heuristic resource. Since this type of specialist is normally expected to be separate in different types of societies, and also associated with two 'ideal' poles of religiosity: 'hunter-gatherers' Siberian societies (shamans) and 'sedentary-agriculture' Mesoamerican and Peruvian civilizations (priests) (Hultkrantz 1980 cited in Neurath 2008c: 13; Muller 1855 cited in Neurath 2008c: 13; Neurath 2011a: 25). This is a bit unclear. However, this result is too schematic even for those 'prototypical cases'. 'Shamanic societies' invariably present liturgical rituals, and societies dominated by hieratically liturgical religious traditions invariably have more 'ecstatic, performance-centred practices' (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 12). Among the O'dam, it often happens that *xiotalh* leaders are *mamkagim* as well, but both institutions are kept separated.<sup>286</sup>

An important contrast between the Huichol and the O'dam cases is in relation to the social scope where we find the distinction between 'two poles of religiosity'. While among the former this tension occurs between two levels of social organization, the communal and the kinship (Neurath 2011a: 24), among the O'dam, this separation is determined by the different scopes of life and the associated ancestors that both specialists relate to. While the *xiotalh* leaders, kinship and communal,<sup>287</sup> interact with well-defined benign deities related to agriculture and hunting, the *mamkagim* deal with dangerous and often uncertain forces associated with the underworld and the dead, but also with the solar benign gods. Their initiation processes are similar, and in this respect the initiation of the *xiotalh* leaders is very much 'shamanic'.<sup>288</sup> The main, important difference is that while the *xiotalh* leaders hold retreats in their respective *xiotalh* patio, establishing communication with their own communal, or kinship ancestors, the *mamkagim* retreat is in the forest and their main interlocutors are

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<sup>286</sup> Neurath (2011a: 21) observes for the Huichol that there is an 'ecstatic shamanism as part of a hierarchical and complex ritual organization'. Thereafter, the discussion is not about how to make a classification with these two 'ideal types' or to think in an evolutionary sequence between the two of them, but about how these institutions are articulated (Neurath 2008c: 13).

<sup>287</sup> The kinship *xiotalh* leaders reproduce on a smaller scale the attributes of the communal patio and the *mamkagim*'s attributes are independent of this.

<sup>288</sup> Neurath (2011a: 25) and researchers working in the Maya area (Tedlock 1982 cited in Neurath 2011a: 25) use the term 'shaman-priest' or 'priest-shaman'.

those agents who had required their services as healers, which can be the diseases themselves.

Both specialists conduct and direct rituals, they are skilful speakers, and one of their main attributes is to transmit messages to the gods. Both are complex enunciators able of simultaneous interaction with different beings given their accumulation of many, and even contradictory, identities (Cf. Severi 2002: 34). Nevertheless, the *mamkagim*'s mastery of speech has to be superior, given the diversity of situations they potentially face. Furthermore, the *mamkagim*'s visionary experiences (dreams) are central in those interactions between themselves and the ancestors, who the *mamkagims* are able of see in their human form. Both types of specialists are held in high regard in O'dam society but they contrast in this respect as well. The *xiotalh* leaders play a key role in the reproduction of the social group, leading the agricultural-hunting ceremonies as well as the people's 'life-crisis' rituals which allow them to become accomplished people (Chapter 1).<sup>289</sup> The communal leaders work for the benefit of the whole community and they deserve its support for their lifelong expenses as retribution, since they do not charge for their services. Differently, even though people require the *mamkagim*'s services to 'reset' their relationship with the gods and the spirits, people would prefer not to have a relationship with them. The *mamkagim* can heal as much as they can inflict damage, and people are often reluctant for fear of being cheated by a *makgim*. 'Lawyer' is one of *mamkagim*'s nicknames, given that they advocate on their patient's behalf before the deities. But 'liar' is another word people use often, since they can never be certain of a *makgim*'s intentions, and whether what they say is true or not.

On the communal level, there is also a tension between the *xiotalh* leaders, the courthouse officers, and the agrarian authorities. As a group, the three set to work on behalf of the whole community in three different specific

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<sup>289</sup> Among the O'dam the main contrasts is between the communal and the kinship levels in the *xiotalh*. In the former, they emphasise the reproduction of the communal hierarchies and agriculture over the kinship groups and hunting. At the kinship level, it is more important to emphasise the 'individuals and the corn' life stages as well as the relation to deer hunting and their kinship ancestors.

scopes of interaction with alterity.<sup>290</sup> The *xiotalh* is no doubt a pre-Hispanic institution and the *xiotalh* leaders interact with the native gods of agriculture and hunting. The courthouse officers correspond to the Spanish *cabildo*, a colonial introduction, and they mainly deal with instances of the Mexican state. Finally, the agrarian authorities are the result of the Mexican agrarian reformation in the first half the 20th century. Among these three sets of authorities, the courthouse officers are able to go from one scope of interaction to another, they are authorities in the courthouse, they have a place to sit in the *xiotalh* patio, and they have a voice in the agrarian assemblies.



**Diagram 7 The three sets of communal authorities and their character as intermediators**

The courthouse officers represent the ancestors in their way of deification and they are themselves, on the way to be ancestralised, which happens once they pass away. However, there are courthouse officers who manage prestige and position in life, who are recognized in some communities as 'elders'.<sup>291</sup> They are respected former governors who are also recognised because of their knowledge of O'dam traditions. They have a similar status to the *xiotalh* leaders

<sup>290</sup> Which also inform us about the origins of this 'otherness.'

<sup>291</sup> Known as *ancianos* or *principales* in Mexican literature (Cf. Cancian 1967). Their identification has been ambiguous among the southern Tepehuan because they do not to conform an organized body or council, as is common in central and south Mexico (Cf. Escalante 1994; Reyes 2010b).



although they have no control over any social space. Nevertheless, the *comuneros* always hear their opinion, which very often contravenes the courthouse officers and jeopardises their authority.

## Conclusion

O'dam humanity as the 'the social condition of the person' (Descola 2012: 36; Viveiros de Castro 2013: 432) is defined through their relationship with their deified ancestors by cultivating and eating maize; by accomplishing all the ritual work that this demands; by attending the church-based festivals; and by going on retreats in the forest. This is what the O'dam refer to, when they define 'the O'dam', 'the people', in contrast to those with different types of social practices whom they place on the margins of humanity. Nevertheless, the O'dam can recognize this type of humanity among other indigenous people and other beings who have developed similar social forms of life. Thus, while in principle the term 'O'dam' differentiates them from other peoples like the Huichol, the Cora or the Mestizos, within a wider scope of alterity, especially in opposition to the latter, the semantic content of the term O'dam comprehends 'all indigenous' people. As one of my friends told me, while we were looking at pictures of the Hopi, 'so, they are the O'dam in that place'.<sup>292</sup>

The relationship with the gods being a central aspect in the O'dam characterisation of their humanity, in the six chapters of this dissertation I have described different scopes of interaction between the O'dam and their gods, which also correspond to the domains of the different deities. These interactions are mainly developed in ceremonial contexts through the mediation of ritual actions in the *xiotalh* patios, the church, or the retreats in the forest, in a regular and well-structured base.<sup>293</sup> In this closing section, I now address two questions which I consider the logical consequences of the preceding chapters: what is the nature of the relationship between humans and gods? And what do ritual actions tell us about this relationship?

My starting point in this inquiry is a statement that I heard from many O'dam over the years, and which led me to research this dissertation

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<sup>292</sup> This distinction is similar to the one they make for all white, blond, or foreign people generically called '*gringos*'. The term otherwise used by Mexicans to specifically allude to Americans.

<sup>293</sup> It is important to mention that these are not the only contexts in which people interact with deities. In fact, these ceremonial contexts are a way of 'bringing deities close' since many have 'houses' in different topographic features like mountains and caves, which individuals frequently visit on their own in order to ask favours of the gods.

(Introduction): 'to be O'dam is really hard, it is a lot of work, this was the way the Gods left it'. By 'work' they mean *el costumbre*, as constituted by all the activities that they conduct in the ceremonial contexts mentioned above, where the O'dam address the deities. In O'dam cosmology, they acquired these 'ritual obligations' in replication of those actions that their ancestors conducted in primordial times after their own creation. But different from other indigenous traditions in Mexico and North America, where there are clear references to the origins of humankind emerging from the underworld or from the ocean on the west side of the world (Cf. Neurath 2005a), these mythological passages are blurry in O'dam accounts. However, these stories state and stress how the O'dam ancestors managed to transform themselves into gods by being *xidhuukam*, that is by fulfilling various vows of abstinence to 'cleanse themselves' and go to heaven. The O'dam address the gods in their prayers as *jich chat* and *jich nan*, 'our father' and 'our mother', and generically refer to them as *jich gi'kora*, 'our Parents'. By the same token, in their prayers the O'dam name themselves in relation to the former as *jum mamar*, *jum su'mpulh*, *jum tajañi*, 'your children, your blossoms, your offspring'. Gods are either human's *gi'kora* or the *gi'kora* of other beings, such as various plants and animals.<sup>294</sup> Consequently, the first notable relationship between humans and deities is a descendant relation.

By maintaining the abstinences the ancestors created the world and deified themselves. However, not all human predecessors were deified or survived the original times. Mythological accounts establish that certain beings became petrified at the first sunrise (Chapter 4) and that at least two former 'humanities' were subsequently destroyed.<sup>295</sup> There are stories and material evidence of giant beings known as *tɛ'tɛb totnam* (literally long feet) or *tɛ'tɛb sanblas kam* (literally long legs)<sup>296</sup> who inhabited earth before the O'dam. These beings had maize and they knew how to cook it. Nevertheless, despite the fact

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<sup>294</sup> As Amazonian ethnographers have explained, in Amerindian cosmologies the common referent for all the entities that live in the world is not Man as a species but humanity as a condition (Descola 2012: 36). However, these cosmologies do not usually involve all animals or plants, but only those which perform a key symbolic or practical role (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 471).

<sup>295</sup> 'Humanity' being mainly defined by the knowledge of cultivation, and by the use of maize as food.

<sup>296</sup> People state they also have proper forenames, among these are Tutuar, O'm and Jix kai' chio'ñ (Natalia Rodríguez, Kauxbilhim).

that they had corn and tools for grinding and cooking it, they could not ingest it because they had no anus and were thus unable to defecate. 'They only pretended to eat it,' or when they actually did, 'they urinated *pixnate* (toasted ground maize water)'. These pre-O'dam humans disappeared when the 'bitter wind' came one day and devastated them. Some of them tried to shelter in caves, but eventually they all died. Nowadays we can see the enormous [archaeological] tools, such as pots, and stone mortars that they left in caves (Reyes 2015b).<sup>297</sup>

A second humanity was destroyed through a world-wide flood. One man managed to save himself along with his black dog, maize seeds, plum seeds, and many animals, using a hollow gourd as a boat. After forty days floating on the sea, and lighting fires in the boat, the earth dried out and they were able to leave the gourd and populate the earth again.<sup>298</sup> Despite the man being alone, every afternoon when he came home after working in the fields, corn tortillas had already been made. He wondered who was making the tortillas since there was only him and the dog. One day he pretended to leave home and hid himself to watch over the house. Then he saw how the black dog peeled its skin off, 'as if it were a jacket', and a woman in a white dress emerged. The man promptly took the dog's skin and threw it into the fire and thus she remained a woman. They had children and O'dam people say they are the offspring of a dog (Trinidad Morales, Juktir, 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2005; Cf. Willett 1991: 276).<sup>299</sup> Although I do not intend to establish a chronological or historical sequence between these two accounts, it seems that this second humanity was more closely related to the O'dam than the giants were. Not only because the position of the giants in

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<sup>297</sup> This story shares many elements with the wide extended pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican 'story of the suns'. In the Aztec version, giants lived under the second sun and were destroyed when the sky collapsed, while the fourth sun, the 'Wind Sun', was destroyed by the wind (Brotherston 1992: 238-245). In Cora mythology the giants fed themselves rocks, incense smoke, and raw meat, and they died because of the effect of a 'poisoned smoke' (Valdovinos 2008: 31). Furthermore, the fact that it was the wind which destroyed the O'dam predecessors and presumably brought the O'dam to the scene, coincides with the Tarahumara version of their creation, since it was God who blew on mud figures to grant them life (Merrill quoted by Martínez 2011: 54).

<sup>298</sup> Other versions state they spent five years floating on the sea (Ambriz and Gurrola 2013a: 30-35; Willett 1991: 271).

<sup>299</sup> In the Aztec Legend of the Suns, the flood destroyed the first sun – the Water Sun – and turned humans into fish (Brotherston 1992: 241).

O'dam ancestry is ambiguous,<sup>300</sup> but also because the O'dam explicitly express, sometimes jokingly, that the dog is 'their mother' (Cf. Ambriz and Gurrola 2013a: 35).<sup>301</sup>

Besides having a descent relationship with the deities, the O'dam also established a relationship of alliance with the deities, which is mainly explained through the mythological account of 'the maize's wedding' (Chapter 1). In this account the first grower establishes an alliance with the mother of the maize, Mother Earth, who is a being from the underworld (Cf. Neurath 2008a). The details of the corn's mother's identity and her character are not explicit in the known O'dam accounts; however, in both Huichol and Mexicanero versions (Preuss 1982 [1969]: 207; 1998 [1907]: 153-170), the first cultivator finds the maize by following the ants to their house under the earth. Thus, the Corn-woman, or better expressed as the Corn-Goddess, comes out of the underworld, and following the first cultivation failure, leaves her husband on earth and ascends to heaven. The relation of humans with the Corn-woman combines descent and alliance, as well as the transition of some of the ancestors from the underworld to the upper-world in heaven. Children and *junbaa*' (corn cobs) are the offspring of this marriage, and in order to make the latter edible for the former they have to be separated from one another. Without this separation, eating corn would be a potentially cannibalistic act. But this separation during the *xiotalh* (Chapter 1) does not mean that children stop being corn, the *junbaa*' leave humanity to become deities.<sup>302</sup>

Beside these 'pre-O'dam humanities', mythical accounts leave the door open to the idea that the Mestizos, or the ancestors of the mestizos, also

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<sup>300</sup> As Neurath (2002: 232) has documented among the Huichol, who shared with the former a similar story, in some versions, they are the Huichol's ancestors but in others, they are the mestizos' ancestors, whom the Huichol defeated and took from them land and tools (Neurath 2011b: 207).

<sup>301</sup> This account also makes explicit the humanity of the dogs, as with the stories I explored in chapters 1, and 4 which state the humanity of maize, deer and their 'relatives'. These accounts make explicit how the species in the myths look to the other beings as they look to those of their kind, 'as humans' (Viveiros de Castro 2013: 422). The dog's jacket also reminds us of the notion of 'clothing' as 'one of the privileged expressions of metamorphosis' (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 471).

<sup>302</sup> 'The phantom of cannibalism is the Amerindian equivalent of the problem of 'solipsism in western societies' (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 481); for the Huichol, see Neurath (2008a: 42).

existed in primordial times.<sup>303</sup> In fact, many stories attribute actions of creation, self-sacrifice, and purification to the Catholic Spanish saints. Let us remember that according to these stories, it was either Saint Michael or the Morning Star who hunts the deer and leads the first *xiotalh* (Chapter 4). The Mestizo ancestors are in this regard very close to the O'dam, in the way that they, as well as the O'dam 'native ancestors' (the *xiotalh* deities), maintained the ritual abstinences, cleansed themselves and went to heaven.

These O'dam conceptions about the existence of Mestizos in primordial times coincide with Neurath's observations among the Huichol, to whom the mestizo world and 'its modernity' are part of a pre-existent and original –rather than created – dark, aquatic world. Looking at healing processes provides us with valuable information in this regard, since many of the pathological agents that the *mamkagim* must counteract belong to this realm (chapters 3 and 6). For instance, when a *makgim* is looking for a lost soul in the underworld, he sees himself (probably as a cowboy) herding a calf (a European animal), which is the lost soul, and has to claim it and deal with procedures proper to Mexican (Mestizo) bureaucracy. In these situations, it is important to notice that the lost soul is wandering around the Pacific coast, not only an aquatic (primordial) area of the world, but also a region dominated by the Mestizos who employ and exploit indigenous people on their plantations.

In mythological times the O'dam had to control their 'Mestizo ancestors or gods from church' through the ritual work of their healers. Moreover, by observing the process of the introduction of new Catholic cults in church it is possible to affirm that these ritual actions (including the sacrifice of calves) are designed to satisfy a deity's request and in consequence 'keep them alive' (Chapter 2). This is ultimately what the healers manage to do with deceased O'dam souls as well: bring them back from the darkest region of the universe (where they were atoning for their guilt) and send them to heaven to become

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<sup>303</sup> Many ethnographies among Mexican indigenous peoples demonstrate how those spirits from the underworld are considered at the same time ancestors and enemies, and are very often identified as mestizos. For instance, for the Tzeltal Maya, souls can be animals, atmospheric phenomena, Catholic priests, teachers or cowboys (Pitarch 1996: 32-84; 2000: 131). Among the Huichol, the very similar terms *tewi*, *tewari* and *teiwari* mean respectively people, ancestor, and mestizo or enemy (Neurath 2008a: 30; 2011b: 206). Other relevant Mexican examples are the Otomí documented by Galinier (2004: 156-158) and the Nahuatl studied by Romero (2011b: 57).

benign ancestors. It is for this reason that, among the souls of the dead, the souls of those who were never born, as a result of abortion or miscarriage, remain in an ambiguous (and potentially dangerous) position, because they have not been ‘humanised’, or initiated in the *xiotalh* patio or in the Church. Thus, they have to be baptised during the *jootos* in order to achieve ‘salvation’ (Chapter 6). Conversely, even though there is a ‘white dog’ on the Mezquital River that allows for Mestizo souls cross to the other side, just as a dark dog does with O’dam souls, the souls of the Mestizo are not retrieved by the *makgim* during the *jootos*, implying the possibility that Mestizo souls remain in the underworld.<sup>304</sup>

Among the most dangerous diseases is the *susto del agua* –fear of water – which is clearly provoked by spirits from the aquatic underworld, since this is acquired when close to springs and rivers (Chapter 3). The injurious agents in this case are the *nibi gio gu nabaat*, ‘the mestizo mermaids’. The greatest risk here is that they are looking to turn the O’dam into, husbands and wives, thus setting up a relation of alliance. Moreover, the greatest disease for the O’dam is referred to by the Spanish word *daño* –damage – and is always conceived as the outcome of witchcraft. Only the *gæ’ mamkagim*, the greatest healers, are capable of dealing with this disease, although there are not many of them among the O’dam. In fact, many O’dam consider that only Huichol healers are effective against *daño* (Chapter 3). For a long time I thought that the O’dam held Huichol healers in higher regard than their own. However, it is important to notice that for any ailment, and especially in the case of the more dangerous illnesses, O’dam people look for healers who are not related to them; not only from outside the kinship group but also from a different village or a different community, since relatives or neighbours are always under suspicion of being the source of witchcraft (Cf. Favret-Saada, 1980: 8), especially the healers who are potentially always sorcerers.<sup>305</sup> As the *daño* is the most dangerous illness, it

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<sup>304</sup> My O’dam friends mention that basically, ‘they do not know’ what happens to Mestizo souls after they cross the river, and that while the O’dam have the *jootos* and the Mestizos celebrate mass in church, they cannot confirm that masses have the same effects

<sup>305</sup> As Romero (2011b: 143) asserts for the Nahua case, those who know they are the object of witchcraft look for their healing in a different community or municipality, ‘far away from their aggressor’s sight’.

is the Huichol who are sought after for the cure, as they are considered as being the farthest 'kin people' available, as they do not belong to the same social group, but are still O'dam (indigenous) in a wide sense, and are thus still considered distant relatives, or 'cousins'.

The 'problematic' status of healers comes from their close relationship with all sorts of ancestral beings, especially those of the underworld. They can heal as much as they can harm. Furthermore, as an old man told me once while explaining why they have to go on retreats into the forest: 'the Tepehuan people did not receive [from the gods] anything but the pipe, tobacco, some feathers, a case, and the arrows for healing [...] the Tepehuan are poor, but healers' (Saturnino Solís Mendoza, Chapter 3); meaning that potentially everyone has this kind of knowledge.

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In the previous section I addressed the relationship between the O'dam and the gods, exploring the nature of this relationship mainly through mythology and other exegesis. Also, in the former chapters I explored the O'dam cosmology through the prayers pronounced by the ritual specialists, given that these discourses manage to capture many of the aspects otherwise not developed in mythological accounts (Cf. Severi 1996: 9-60). However, it is in the scope of different ritual contexts that this relationship is most clearly actualized. By this I am not implying that ritual actualises myth, but we must have in mind their 'intersections' (Cf. Izard and Smith 1982: xviii). The analysis of ritual actions allows us to define 'conceptions of the world with greater assurance than [only] through the use of cosmological discourses and narratives' (Galinier 2004: 7), as after all, 'the action of persons provides the major key to their world view' (Hallowell 1981: 21). As Levi-Strauss (1997 [1971]: 607) observed, ritual, in its relation to mythology, turns to 'dividing up' [*morcellement*] and 'repetition' to transmit its messages. This repetition expresses configurations of time and space that are 'more reliable than those reconstituted by the best informants' (Galinier 2004: 7). Consequently, myths and rituals, and in this case prayers,



should be approached as a 'single field of experience' (Galinier 2004: 5).<sup>306</sup> In regard to O'dam cosmology, the *xiotalh*, the *jootos*, as well as the initiations in the forest, display configurations of time and space in regard to their relationship with their deities. Even in those ceremonies celebrated in church, which in principle come from a different 'way of thinking' about space and time, the O'dam manage to reproduce those patterns displayed in the rituals from the 'native matrix tradition'. For this reason, and in order to provide an organised, fluent presentation, over the following pages I mainly focus on those 'native' ritual contexts such as the *xiotalh*, the *jootos*, and the initiation in the forest, since these share a common base which is the organization of space and time. In regards to the church-based sphere of action, I provide some comments mainly as footnotes where relevant.

For the O'dam, the *xiotalh* is undoubtedly the most important ceremonial space, as it is clear that even though many do not frequently engage very deeply in the scope of the church, or do not get initiated in the forest, most will still participate in the *xiotalh*.<sup>307</sup> The disposition of *xiotalh* patios as well as the development of these ceremonies brings together and displays an O'dam conception of time and space.<sup>308</sup> However, while the *xiotalh* mainly emphasises the action of the ancestors for the re-creation of the world, the *jootos* underscores the role of the Dead as well as the dead ancestors as part of the regeneration of life (Cf. Bloch and Parry 1996). By the same token, let us preliminarily say that while the *xiotalh* focuses on the bright, eastern, ritually-created aspects of life, the *jootos* emphasises the dark, western, pre-existent aspects of life. Additionally, the initiation in the forest highlights a very specific path, followed by those ancestors who managed to be deified. While the *xiotalh* is oriented to maintaining an equilibrated relationship with the ancestors who

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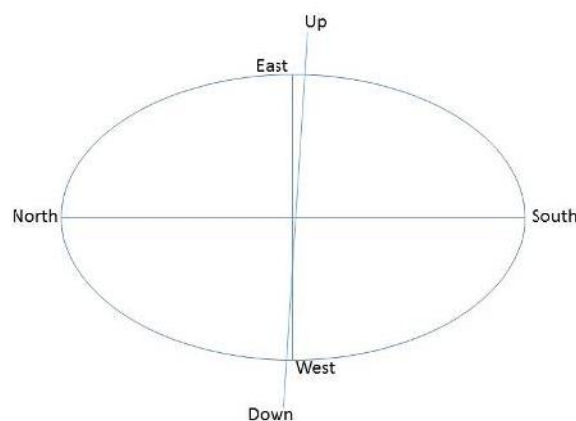
<sup>306</sup> In this regard Galinier (2004: 1-12) follows Hugh-Jones (1979: 252-260) in his approach to the relation between myth and ritual.

<sup>307</sup> The only exceptions are probably those individuals converted by evangelical churches. It is worth mentioning that there are not many of these and they are limited to a couple of families in Santa María de Ocotán, San Francisco de Ocotán, and San Pedro Jícoras. In Santa María de Ocotán, these families were former collaborators of linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

<sup>308</sup> Preuss (1998 [1908]: 267) contended that all the indigenous groups in the Gran Nayar area share the same basic ideas expressed in the *mitote* ceremonies. Moreover, Pintado (2008) demonstrated that the Tarahumara share a similar conception of time and space in their '*fiestas de patio*'.

grant life,<sup>309</sup> the *jootos* and the initiation in the forest remind us that this equilibrium is not stable, and has to be managed by controlling dangerous forces such as illness and death.<sup>310</sup>

*Xiotalh* patios do not only represent the world, they also recreate the habitat of those who live in it (Cf. Valdovinos 2008: 54). The ritual space is circular 'like the world', and it is conceptually divided by two vertical axis, one corresponding to the daily course of the sun, east-west, and another to the annual movement of the sun from the south, in the winter solstice, to the north, in the summer solstice (Jáuregui 2003: 280-281; Neurath 2002: 81-82; Valdovinos 2008: 54). As Preuss (1998 [1911]: 408) observed a long time ago: the border of the ceremonial centre corresponds with the border of the world; the four directions in the ceremonial patio are the directions where the gods live and receive offerings; and the central fire represents the sun. Consequently, the location of actions, objects, and people at the different sides of the ceremonial patio allude to the deities and the ancestors living in those regions of the world which people reproduced in the ceremonial centre (Cf. Valdovinos 2008: 37).



**Diagram 8 The O'dam conception of the World**

<sup>309</sup> This feature attributed to the gods seems to be coincident to the observation made by Pitrou (2014) among the Mixe (from Oaxaca, Mexico), make a distinction between the characteristics and vital processes of living beings (growth, degeneration, reproduction, etc.) and their personified causes such as the entity known as 'The One Who Makes Live'.

<sup>310</sup> Church festivals commemorate the first apparition of the Mestizo gods and their subsequent 'domestication' and the cult that the O'dam founded around them.

While it is true that not all the *xiotalh* patios are arranged in exactly the same way, there are many common significant features that all share: stones delimiting the circular dancing area, a place in the centre for the fire, and the location of an altar on the eastern side. Many *xiotalh* also have a place for the kitchen on the western side. The communal *xiotalh* patio in Juktir stands out among others because the southern and the northern cardinal points are clearly marked by the collocation of both firewood piles –one for men and another for women – and architectural structures. In this *xiotalh*, the kitchen has its place in the northern building (Reyes 2006a: 72). This distribution also entails assimilation between the eastern and the southern sides as solar masculine spheres on one hand, and the western and northern sides as the dark feminine spheres, on the other. Conversely, in Chianarkam men and women pile firewood on the southern side of the patio and a big kitchen is located on the western side, opposite the altar. In many *xiotalh* there is no structure for the kitchen, but the fire on which the *tua'dam* cooks the ceremonial meals is set on the same side. During the ceremony, the relation between these two world regions, the west and the east, is mainly displayed through the movement of foodstuffs. People bring ingredients like raw squashes or corn, and chocolate bars, place them on the altar, and later the *tua'dam* takes these to prepare meals in the kitchen. Afterwards, these ingredients are returned to the altar on the eastern side of the patio as cooked food.<sup>311</sup>

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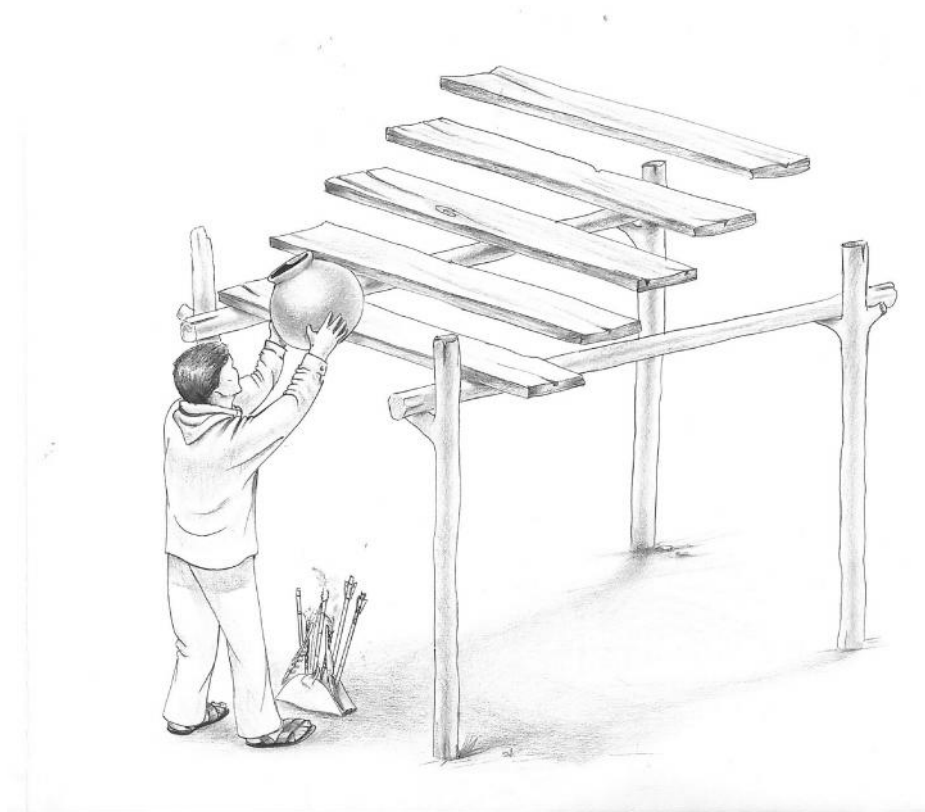
<sup>311</sup> A transition from 'nature' to 'culture' in the culinary code (Lévi-Strauss 1996 [1964]).



**Image 52** *Tua'dam* working outdoors on the western side of the *xiotalh* patio, in the kitchen

The altar at the *xiotalh* is located on the eastern side of the patio, and is the smallest structure in the ceremonial centre as well as the most important element given its association with the Place of the Sunrise. Characterised as the founders of the *xiotalh*, the ceremonial leaders perform the most important ritual actions in front of the altar or, if they have not set it up yet, while facing eastwards, and address prayers to the deities who live in that direction (Chapter 4). This structure not only corresponds to the eastern side of the world, but simultaneously includes all the regions of the world (Cf. Neurath 2002: 229-239) and unfolds the upper region of the vertical axis (Valdovinos 2008: 54-55), and reproduces the whole universe on three levels (Cf. Neurath 2002: 238). In this unfolding, the O'dam altars highlight their positions as the final stages of the path to heaven, with the surfaces of the altar, formed of five wooden planks, being the stairs to heaven. Thus the items that the *xiotalh* participants place on these steps is meant to go with God at some point of the ceremony (Reyes 2006a: 155). Some of these items are the tutelary deities themselves, impersonated by the feathered sticks named *iagit*. They stand beside the front legs of the altar during the first part of the *xiotalh*, accessible to the people who attach feathers to them. At the final stage of the celebration, during the dance of the night, these sticks are moved to the rear part of the platform as an indication of their departure to heaven (chapters 1 and 4). Thus, while the western front of

the altar corresponds to the edge of the human world and the beginning of the path to heaven, the rear side corresponds with the end of this path, characterising the surface of the altar as a transitional phase in this journey.<sup>312</sup> In this cosmogram, the flowered arch over the front of the altar corresponds to the dome of the sky and the stars (Preuss 1998 [1906]: 115; Valdovinos 2008: 56), which in the O'dam case acts as an archway to heaven.<sup>313</sup> In this schema, the *xiotalh* leaders locate themselves and their arrows at the point of mediation between humans and the deities, the former being the ancestors living people and the arrows their material manifestation, which are simultaneously themselves and the original *xiotalh* leaders and founders (Reyes 2010a).



**Image 53 The transitional character of the *xiotalh* altar**

<sup>312</sup> Valdovinos (2008: 56) observes that among the Cora the altar reproduces a threefold structure of the world in which the surface of the altar corresponds to the surface of the earth, the flowered arch above refers to heaven, while the space under the altar to the underworld. However, among the O'dam, the fact that only the *xiotalh* leaders have access to the surface of the altar shows its transitional character is closer to heaven than to earth.

<sup>313</sup> Altars in church have similar arch effects with the same character (Chapter 2). In the Holy week celebration, the crosses from the altar to the Holy Sepulchre have to pass through the space under the arches and they return in the same way when they rise to go to their place.

At the end of the ceremony, the participants consume the items that they have placed on the on the altar. However, it is important to note that firstly this was the foodstuff of the deities, who feed themselves by consuming the aroma or the vapours of the offerings. For this reason, all those items that are supposed to be the food for the deities have to be placed while they are warm and emitting aromatic steam and vapours. The same principle applies when people offer animal blood, which has to be placed on the altar immediately after the animal's sacrifice (chapters 2 and 6).<sup>314</sup>



**Image 54 *Xiotalh* altar with vaporising offerings on the top**

The most important items that people place on the altar are raw corn ears, but these are not 'offerings' since the deities do not take anything, despite the fact that women use these ingredients to prepare meals, some of which are indeed placed as offerings later. These corn ears are the actual 'wives and offspring of

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<sup>314</sup> This differentiated way of eating implies the differentiated nature of gods and human beings, who also have different types of bodies. As Fausto (2002: 16) observes, eating in certain way and particular types of food defines particular types of beings, and eating implies the transformation into them.

the men' from their relationship with the Corn-woman.<sup>315</sup> It is for this reason that only men contribute maize ears to the ceremony. Altars are like the barns that the Corn-woman requested the first cultivator to build in order to sleep there with him. According to the mythological account, the next morning the barn was full of maize ears. Later they celebrated a *xiotalh* and the Corn-woman went to heaven because the man had failed in his duties by being unfaithful. Women participating in the *xiotalh* are daughters of this relationship and they do not contribute corn ears, since they cannot 'harvest themselves' from the fields, because 'women do not have fields' (Chapter 1),<sup>316</sup> and because the 'human men's wives' belong to their father's family *xiotalh* (Benítez 1980: 85; Reyes 2006a: 41; Cf. Riley 1969: 820).<sup>317</sup>

In opposition to the *xiotalh*' eastern altar, on the western side of the world there is the kitchen. However, this contrast is better and more clearly expressed by the western altar used during the *jootos*, which completes the O'dam image of the world. These ceremonies are normally carried out in the yard of the deceased's house or, as in the ceremony that I have previously described (Chapter 6), in an isolated place in the forest. Despite the fact that these types of structure are not common in the *xiotalh* patios, they can be placed there in the event of a *jootos* for the soul of a deceased ceremonial leader (Cf. Benítez 1980: 99-108; Reyes et al. 2015; Sánchez 1980: 104). In the same way that eastern altars in the *xiotalh* correspond to the brightest, solar, eastern region of the world, the *jootos*' altars match the darkest, lower, western region. This simultaneously displays the movements of the sun on its east-west horizontal axis and on its up-down vertical axis. It is notable that these altars are high platforms requiring a ladder to access the surface above. However, the objects that people manipulate and the actions they perform on this western side of the

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<sup>315</sup> As Viveiros de Castro (1992: 90) has observed among the Araweté and as noted by Lévi-Strauss, cooking is a cultural transformation of food, in whose 'brute state, pure potentiality, is the raw –the perfect metaphor of divine ambivalence'.

<sup>316</sup> Women participate significantly in the agricultural labour of maize fields, even helping to harvest the crop. However, they are strictly forbidden to do this during the maize's tender, *títinip* stage.

<sup>317</sup> This is one of the most important differences between these types of celebrations between the O'dam on one side, and the Cora (Cf. Coyle 2001: 33; Cf. Valdovinos 2008: 154) and the Huichol (Cf. Neurath 2002: 168) on the other. Being bilateral kinship celebrations, men and women contribute maize ears for the preparation of ritual meals, or the men act on behalf of their domestic group. This is not clear from the ethnography among the Mexicanero who in general are closer in many ritual aspects to the O'dam (Cf. Alvarado 2007: 28-33).

ceremonial space are an inversion of those conducted on the eastern side, with the women's place now on the southern side and the men's side to the north. Here 'everything works the other way round', 'when it is sunrise here, it is the sunset there' (Chapter 6). Consequently, having a platform with a ladder to enable access to the underworld is not in any way nonsensical.

In opposition to eastern altars, there are three important contrasting elements associated with western altars: a baldachin, the 'cold arrows', and the dead calf offerings. The first is a reproduction of the how the underworld must look, as a dark, leafy environment sheltering the green-coloured arrows. These arrows are clearly opposed to the *biñak* and the arrows people use for healing themselves, which are coloured red –like blood – and are referred to as 'warm' arrows, in an allusion to life. But while these arrows are associated with blood and living people, the green arrows instead correspond to the souls of the dead, which during the ceremony require a 'body' to stay within, which is provided by the hollow arrows. In both cases, the arrows are containers either for the vital force known as *ii'mda'*, or for the souls of the dead, named *kokkoi* (singular *kakoi*). The green or 'cold' arrows are also related to their own *nabaich* (clay cups containing roasted agave leaves and water: chapters 1, 3 and 6). The *nabaich* is associated with the initiation of babies into 'people' who are able to feed on maize (Chapter 1). In each case the *nabaich* is related to their initiation either as a person in the case of the former, as an ancestor in the case of the latter (Reyes 2010a: 277).<sup>318</sup>

Differently from hunted deer or squirrels, which are offered on the *xiotalh* altars, the calves that people offer as food to the souls of the dead are sacrificed.<sup>319</sup> These differences also make calves a different type of 'offering'. The death of the deer is the result of auto-sacrifice (Chapter 4), which is

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<sup>318</sup> Coyle (2001: 56) highlights how the equivalent ceremony among the Cora (the Liquor-Drinking Ritual) establishes in the *mitote* a connection between children and the 'deceased maize bundle group ancestors'. The ritual has a similar sense among the O'dam during the *xiotalh*. However, it is important to note how it is precisely through this ritual that babies and youngsters are introduced to the consumption of maize, deer, salt, and liquor, which is what makes them humans instead of deities (Chapter 1).

<sup>319</sup> Except for those communal *xiotalh* where the calf sacrifices are accepted and required (Reyes 2006a: 114). In such cases the animals are provided by the courthouse officers who, as I have explained before (Chapter 5), are identified with the Spanish and mestizo world and with the church, where these kinds of sacrifices are common (Chapter 2).



explained in mythology as the compassion that the deer feels for the hunters.<sup>320</sup> The calves, however, are domestic, European animals that have to be brought tied to the sacrificial place. Deer are *jigiarum* animals (from the forest) while the calves are *sosoi'* or domestic animals (singular *soi'*).<sup>321</sup> In the communal *xiotalh* where calf sacrifice is practiced, as well as at church festivals, the animal is placed on the floor with its head to the east and the legs to the south, an allusion to their recipients, the diurnal bright deities. In contrast, when the animal is destined to be received by dead souls during the *jootos*, calves are positioned pointing to the west and to the north. This qualitative difference is also related to the type of relation people seek to establish with the recipients of the offerings. As Neurath (2008b: 267) has observed among the Huichol, the two types of sacrifices are not very different in regards to the 'gift exchanges' with the deities, which is the main purpose pursued by non-initiated people at rituals. However, at the level of esoteric knowledge possessed by *xiotalh* leaders and *mamkagim*, both types of sacrifices are diametrically opposed. Self-sacrifices, such as deer sacrifices, are the way ancestors and the *xiotalh* leaders create life. Conversely, calf sacrifices are oriented to the control or the domestication of wild forces, such as 'wild fertility' or the spirits of the dead. In the *jootos* ceremonies it is clear that the calf sacrifice is designed to control the soul of the dead person as a way of convincing it to leave peacefully and not to harm any of its relatives. The same principle applies to dark goat sacrifices offered to the Lord of Illness during the *xiotalh* of the rains (Chapter 4), or in order to calm the anger of the mestizo gods threatening the O'dam with damnation (Chapter 5). The deer's self-sacrifice is a 'shamanic' act which creates bright, solar life, while the calf sacrifices are the rejection of the dark, wild life of the underworld (Neurath 2008b: 272).

The most emblematic *xiotalh* feature is the night dance. This performance also starts with linear movements on the east-west axis, continues with circular movements around the fire, and ends in the morning with linear movements again. In the first displacements, headed by the *xiotalh* leaders,

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<sup>320</sup> This detail is not explicit in O'dam accounts, while in Huichol exegesis it is very much emphasised (Neurath 2008b). However, in the mythological accounts that I mentioned earlier (chapter 1 and 4) the deer is a woman who does not resist.

<sup>321</sup> *Soi'* also means 'humble' and it is interesting to notice that the O'dam designation of Jesus Christ, *Jich Xoi'kam* literally means 'Our Humble Person' (Willett et al. 2013: 154).

they bear the feathered stick named *iagit*, which corresponds to the tutelary deities of each particular patio. The first steps are a gradual beginning of the dance performance, corresponding to a gradual movement from the western to the eastern side of the world, which then gives way to circular movements. Men and women dance first in opposite directions around the fire before they begin to move in a single counter-clockwise course. Since all the *xiotalh* allude to the time of the ancestors, before the first sunrise and the consequent hardening of the world,<sup>322</sup> the dance corresponds to the ancestors' tour all around the world during its creation. According to Cora mythology, the world and the *mitote* were originated when the Mother-God knitted a rhombus cross (*cha'anaka*) of her own hair supported by two crossed arrows. When she finished, the object commanded all the ancestors to dance the *mitote* counter-clockwise.<sup>323</sup> From then on, dancing a *mitote* has meant recreating the world (Jáuregui 2003; Neurath 2002: 203; Preuss 1998 [1908]: 257-258).



**Image 55 *Cha'anaka***

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<sup>322</sup> The wet world also refers to the story of the flood that I mentioned above. In fact, during the *xiotalh* the musician places the bow on the gourd which is similar to 'the man' and his dog use as a boat.

<sup>323</sup> This movement coincides with the Coriolis force in the Northern Hemisphere; phenomena which reflects the ancestor's actions, especially from those living in the underworld.

The *xiotalh* dance is divided into five stages, or rounds, over the course of the night. People state that those who danced for the first time were, elevated towards heaven in the third round, and at the fifth round they arrived in heaven (Reyes 2006a: 134). Normally the fifth round starts before the sun rises and finishes when the sun is fully visible in the east. The final movements are once again lineal dance movements. At this point, the deities have departed to heaven and the human participants remain on earth. This separation between the deified ancestors and humans is stressed by the breaking of the fast, with a meal following soon after the final dance. At the *xiotalh* that completes the initiation into consumption of maize for the babies, this separation is stressed by each participants' consumption of salt, which is a definitive human food.

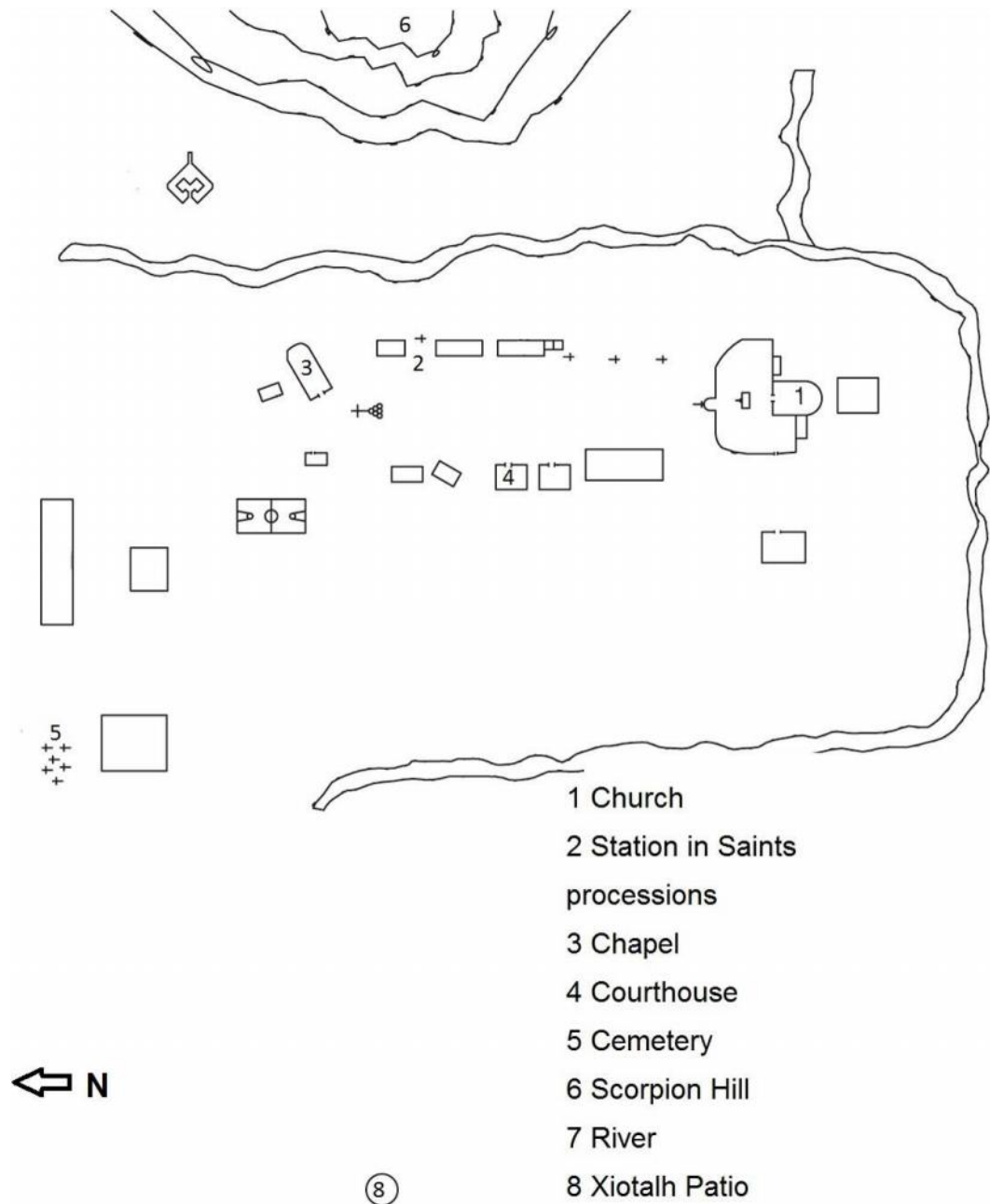
In the scope of ritual, the actions embarked upon during church festivals and the initiation in the forest, are respectively taken to their maximum and minimum expression. During church festivals, oriented towards commemorating the apparition of Christian Gods and their gradual 'domestication' (Chapter 2), all the village becomes the ceremonial space organised under same cosmogram logic of the *quincunx*, otherwise clearly displayed on the *xiotalh* patio.<sup>324</sup> As Willett (1996) observes, there is in church festivals an emphasis on linear movements during the processions (Willett 1996), as in Juktir where the south-north axis is worth remembering as equivalent to the movements east-west, otherwise emphasised in the *xiotalh* and other ceremonies from the native matrix tradition. However, it is important to point out that on their tour around the village (in this case the world), the Christians proceed in a counter clockwise circular movement stopping at the four corners of the world: the church (south), the Naksir tam or Scorpion Hill (east), the chapel (north), and the courthouse (west), all these places are connected by a central street in the village (Reyes 2006a: 159-187).<sup>325</sup> Similar to the *xiotalh* patios, the kitchens, where the *mayordomos* prepare the food for the festivals, are located to the north of the village (being west and north assimilated), except in Holy Week, which is the

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<sup>324</sup> It is worth remembering, that the *pueblos-cabecera* (Introduction) are ceremonial centres in the first place and that they only became more populated spaces in recent years as part of the Mexican state population policies.

<sup>325</sup> This arrangement varies in each village and depends on the location of the local church (Cf. Reyes 2010b).

festival of Christ-Sun, when the kitchen is placed in the centre (similar to the central fire in the *xiotalh* patios), midway between the Church and the chapel.



**Map 4 Main buildings and places in Juktir**

(Reyes 2006a: 38)

In the initiation in the forest, the emphasis is placed on the length of time that the deities and humans spend maintaining the ritual abstinences, normally five weeks, which represent five years or perhaps more, considering that in the time of the gods one human day is equal to one year. During this process, novices

spend the majority of their time in a shelter constructed with similar features to the baldachin on the top of the western altar during the *jootos*.<sup>326</sup> This initiation is the closest circumstance to the initiation of the deities in their pursuit of visions that allowed them to create the world. Ritual action in this context is highly contrasted to that of other contexts, since most of it is oriented towards addressing prayers to recently fashioned ritual objects. However, at the end, the novices emerge from the dark, foliated, western shelter and move to an altar placed at the eastern side of the ceremonial space where, after a night of no sleep, an accomplished *makgim* testifies to their transformation.

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When I went to Juktir in July 2011 to start fieldwork for this dissertation, I told some of my friends there, as well as the local authorities, that I had the intention of studying how healers become healers. I also told them I was prepared to hold the required abstinences for more than a month, if it was needed, in order to fully engage with the process. Later I received news of some of the discussions this provoked among people who wondered to what extent this would affect them or not. On the other hand, my compadre Cesareo Morales (R.I.P), an accomplished healer and the *kikam* on the Morales *xiotalh* patio, told me I should have the maize on the patio first: ‘then you can go on the retreat and do all that you want to do’, he said. It was clear that before dealing with powerful forces I should firstly start relations with more benevolent deities; I should, begin with trying to be an ordinary person in the O’dam sense.

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<sup>326</sup> As Bloch and Perry (1996: 4) point out there many parallels between the symbols of initiation rites and mortuary ceremonies all around the world.



**Image 56** *Makgim* Cesareo Morales (R.I.P.), Selene Galindo Cumplido and Honorio Mendía Soto. Translation working session, Juktir, August 2012

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## Appendices

This section is integrated by three appendixes. The first and second contain those prayers referred in the dissertation, and the third is a glossary with all the non-English words I used in these lines. In both texts in appendixes 1 and 2 the O'dam use the Spanish '*dar parte*', which I have translated as 'the dispatch'. In English and Spanish, a dispatch or '*parte* [de guerra]' are reports in military affairs. Despite the fact that this is not a military context, the name and many of the words in these prayers keep the idea of reporting to the superiors about the people's actions and in this case, both orators the *xiotalh* leaders and the healers, are the emissaries. Furthermore, in line 113 in appendix 1, the *küikam* allude to the kinship group members as *sandarux* which means 'soldiers'.

I recorded the text presented in Appendix 1 in context, during the celebration in May 2009 on the Morales *xiotalh* patio from Santa María de Ocotán. The audio was transcribed and translated into Spanish by Selene Galindo Cumplido who is an O'dam native speaker, from San Francisco de Ocotán, totally bilingual in Spanish, and currently studying the final year of a BA in Social Anthropology in Mexico City. Once she transcribed and did a first translation, we corrected the text with the help of Eugenio Morales, son of Trinidad Morales who is the *xiotalh* leader speaking in the recording. Those phrases which in the translation appear as 'incomprehensible' were phrases which neither Selene Galindo nor Eugenio Morales were able to understand or to translate into Spanish, and which we did not have the opportunity to check with the Speaker. For the translations of those lines that I translate into English in the dissertation, I also had the assistance of Selene Galindo, who has a very good level of this language too.

Appendix 2 was recorded in context during the *jootos* ceremony that I describe in Chapter 6. The transcription and the translation were under the responsibility of Honorio Mendía Soto, from Cerro de las Papas in the community of Santa María de Ocotán, and Selene Galindo Cumplido. This text is rich in information and the language used full of metaphors which only make sense, most of the time, to healers or elders. In this case, the three of us had

the opportunity of working directly with the healer Cesareo Morales, the orator in this prayer. He replied to all of our questions and explained in detail many of the expressions he uses in his speech. Unfortunately the space in this work is insufficient to describe this prayer in detail.

## APPENDIX 1

	O'dam	Spanish
1	<i>Compañero, ah!</i> Dios Jich Chat, Jich Ñan	Compañero, ah Dios Nuestro Padre , Nuestras Madre
2	na bhamuu pai' kik San Pedro	que por allá está parado San Pedro
3	<i>Dios Santo Bandera Mexicana</i>	Dios santa bandera mexicana
4	na ji'k jir <i>templos</i>	cuantos templos
5	na ji'k jir <i>villas</i>	cuantas villas
6	na ji'k <i>ciudades</i>	cuantas ciudades
7	na pui' tu'm jich escojer	que así nos escogió
8	puich nii'ñ <i>todas las horas</i>	así lo ve todas las horas
9	<i>todos los días</i>	todos los días
10	<i>cada mañana</i>	cada mañana
11	ma'n kandhir	una vela
12	yoxii' ji dhagit, alhi'ch chikulat	una flor agarrada, poquito chocolate
13	ji dhagit ma'nka'm	una persona agarrada
14	ji dhagit, <i>Santo Rosario</i>	un Santo Rosario agarrado
15	un <i>Credo</i>	un Credo
16	cham jach jaxbui' pai'dhukat pui' mo ti nii'ñ	no vemos alguna vez así
17	<i>porque</i> na pich gu chi' ap ya oilhimik	porque tú anduviste aquí
18	janoo' <i>de aquellos tiempos</i>	aquel día, de aquellos tiempos
19	<i>cuando amaneció el día</i>	cuando amaneció el día
20	na pich ya pui' tu lijiruk	que aquí así elegiste
21	ya' pui' chu nombraruk	que así nombraste
22	ya' pich mo poneru gu	que aquí pusiste un
23	kikam jich chat	<i>kikam</i> nuestro padre
24	kikam jich nan	<i>kikam</i> nuestra madre
25	umuagim jich chat	<i>umuagim</i> nuestro padre
26	umuagim jich nan	<i>umuagim</i> nuestra madre
27	tua'dam jich chat	<i>tua'dam</i> nuestro padre
28	tua'dam jich nan	<i>tua'dam</i> nuestra madre
29	<i>esos los tres personas</i>	esas tres personas
30	<i>las tres señaladas</i>	las tres señaladas
31	na mit pui' chi kim'pi	que así se limpiaron
32	pui' chu u'xpigak	[incomprensible]
33	pui' boxkar ma' ji dhagit	así agarrando la escoba
34	dhi gook, dhi baik	estos dos, estos tres
35	na jir baik oi'ñdha, man ja titnora' mit ba'	que son tres años [incomprensible]
36	poneruk dhi gook, dhi baik, dhi makob	pusieron esos dos, esos tres, esos cuatro
37	ma'n ja gaikam, gook ja gagaikam	una viga, dos vigas
38	dhi ma'n ja ta'mla, gook ja ta'mla	una de sus tablas, dos de sus tablas
39	baik ja ta'mla	tres de sus tablas
40	no' ba' gu silhkam	si es que es cierto
41	bhai' pui' poneruk	ahí los pusieron

42	ja mit na mit pui' chi isak	que ahí sembraron
43	ya' dir ja mit pui' nombraruk	de aquí que así lo nombraron
42	bhidam jich chat, bhidam jich nan, aich dhak	Nuestro Padre, Nuestra Madre <i>bhidam</i> lo habían traído
44	ma'n yoxii' ki'n, ma'n ku'a' ki'n	con una flor, con un leño
45	kua' gu silhkam nach alh bhan	[incomprensible]
46	pui' chu nam ja na mit bhan pui jach duk ja mit	[incomprensible]
47	janoo' <i>de aquellos tiempos</i>	entonces en aquellos tiempos
48	<i>cuando amaneció el día</i>	cuando amaneció el día
48	<i>cuando amaneció</i>	cuando amaneció
49	dhia' janoo' nat pui' chu xia'ñchudak ja mit	ese día cuando hicieron que amaneciera
50	na mit paidhuk ya' tu xia'ñchuda	cuando aquí hicieron que amaneciera
51	Ya' mit bach dejaru O'dam mamran	aquí nos dejaron a sus hijos
52	O'dam tibañga'n	los O'dam bajados [del cielo]
53	O'dam susbhiga'n, nach ba alh jup duiñchu'	[incomprensible]
54	ach ja mit ba' ya' jich chut'tu	así nos pusieron ellos aquí
55	nach ba' sap pu'ñi ja a'mkam ñiok da'	para que hablemos por ellos
55	dhi chu mamar	esos sus hijos
56	dhi chu tajañi	esos sus hijos [incomprensible]
57	dhi suspulhi'ñ	sus retoños
58	dhi yooxchuk y <i>todo</i> nam ji'k ya'p tu'i <i>presentes</i>	sus flores y todos los que están aquí presentes
59	nam ji'k ya' pai' pui' alh pu guguk am	los que por aquí estuvieron parados
60	nam al pui' alh pui' alh ti bhi je	[incomprensible]
61	na alh jax pui' tu poder tu' dho	así com va pudiendo pues
61	<i>y estamos presentando</i>	en los que está así
62	na alh ji'k bhan pui'	[incomprensible]
63	dho gu' alh mop xich dha'i'ñ ja pim	[incomprensible]
64	alh mop xich ixchoi'ñ ja pim na tu' bhan	[incomprensible]
65	bhan <i>cumplir</i> dhi jam piestas	en lo que cumplimos sus fiestas
66	dhi jam <i>pensiones</i> , señor Jesucristo	sus pensiones, Señor Jesucristo
67	Jesús niño, Pedro San y María santísima	Niño Jesús, San Pedro, María santísima
68	y Santo Niño	y Santo Niño
68	si yo soy Santiago Caballero	si yo soy Santiago Caballero
69	nam ji'k jir San Refugio	esos que son Santa Refugio
70	nam ji'k jir San Miguel Arcangel	Los que son San Miguel Arcángel
71	na mi'xim completaridha' dhi Madre Dolores	que se vaya completando esa madre Dolores
72	Dios Santo	Dios Santo
73	dhi' ja'kbui nach mi' ja bi'ñxi'ñ gu kandhir	a esos a los que les tenemos velas prendidas
74	dhi San Candelario na mi' kik	Ese San Candelario que ahí está parado
74	San Antonio, dhi San Diego	San Antonio, ese San Diego
75	<i>esas personas con ojos muy preciosos</i>	esas personas con ojos muy preciosos
76	<i>manos muy lindas</i>	manos muy lindas
77	Silhkam dho chi?	¿Será cierto?
78	Ke gu' cham jich contestar am?	¿O no nos contestan?
79	nach mo ja tan <i>alguna cosa</i>	que les pedimos alguna cosa

80	nach mo ja pediru'	que les vamos a pedir
81	nada <i>más</i> je nach ach jir jimdak	Nada más que nosotros queremos ir
81	moch komoker mo ma ti'ya' ja tagib	decimos cualquier cosa enfrente de ellos
82	<i>pero que nos perdonen</i>	pero que nos perdonen
83	sia ke todo nach alh ji'k bhan pui' bhan pui' ja'k up sulhi' bo	[incomprensible]
84	alh jach dho ba ja ti'mpo bhan	[incomprensible]
85	ku'ba' gu' silhkam	o será cierto
86	bha'ñi na pai' jup kik	ahí donde está parado
87	jum titgakamit Oi'kam	se nombraron Oi'kam
87	ma'n jir Mobatak	se nombraron Mobatak
88	jir bha'a na pai'dhir pui'	es águila, ahí, de donde así
89	xilhkam ya'ch ba' mop duiñxi'ñ	cierto, aquí estamos hechos
90	sia alh gu ja'xdhir bhan	[incomprensible]
91	pui'chui'ngi na pui' ti titgak nap	[incomprensible]
92	ji'k jir San huajicora	[incomprensible]
93	nam ji'k jir San San Andrés	los que son San Andrés
94	San Tereso, nam tix gi	San Tereso, <i>nam tix gi</i>
94	nach pui' ja im	que aquí estamos su parentela
95	ja titi' ich, ja yamarich	los nombramos, los llamamos
96	mu na pai' kik San Nicolás	allá donde está parado San Nicolás
97	San Lucas, San Tlalpan, San Andrés	San Lucas, San Tlalpan, San Andrés
98	dhi' ja'kbui' bhan jach ach ya' ja im	todos estos aquí nosotros los llamamos
99	<i>doce apóstoles, doce cabildantes</i>	doce apóstoles, doce cabildantes
100	Ku' ba' añ pui' kai'ch, pui' jam imit jam tiyat	[incomprensible]
100	na jax chu'm santo jich joi'ñdham	Cualquier santo que nos tenga misericordia
101	mop jich kaya'	que nos escuche
102	gu Dios jich Chat gu gæ'	Nuestro Dios Padre el grande
103	cham jach ji'xkat mo ñio'kdha',	nunca lo vamos a saludar
104	cham jach ji'xkat mo tu a'ghidha'	nunca vamos a hablar con él
105	cham ji'xkat jich kontestaru'	nunca nos va a contestar
106	ni ach kuch cham ji'xkat kontestaru'	ni nosotros nunca le vamos a contestar
107	<i>solamente</i> nach alh ach pui'	solamente que así
107	solamente pui'nach ach alh pui' pix up alh kai'chidha'	[incomprensible]
108	sia alh dhix ikora' bhan	[incomprensible]
109	jix chanara' bhan	[incomprensible]
110	<i>pero a este Dios</i>	pero a este Dios
111	<i>a este Dios</i> nach buiñor pui' mop tu'i	a este Dios con el que estamos
112	buiñor jach pui'p moch kurarim	con el que nos estamos curando
113	Sia <i>que todo</i> , cham jañ mo añ jam gar, dhim mamar	osea que todo, yo no[incomprensible]
113	dhim sandarux chuk siam mi'kdir jup ji sulhigik	Tus soldados aunque vayan retrasados
114	na mo cham jax jix chu bhai' ya' nach ti nai' chi ni'ñ	Que no hay espacio aquí que estamos viendo
115	<i>ojala</i> ku gu jumai tanolh ya' pix ja'x up tim kikbo'	Ojala que otro día aquí de nuevo nos reunamos
116	na gu' dhi' señalarix, dhi' nar <i>diez de</i>	orque está señalado, ese día diez de septiembre

septiembre,

117	maxik jach pui' ti ni'	claramente así bailamos
118	gioba' <i>el día quince de octubre</i> nach yani' pui' alh ja'k ji sulhgi'	y luego el día quince de octubre que aquí así nos regresamos
119	<i>pero</i> dho ba' ji ahí esta Dios	pero pues ahí está Dios
120	ya'ch alh mox mat dhi' ja'kbui' <i>esos puntos</i>	aquí así sabemos esos puntos
120	dhi tres puntos parte nañ añ pui' kaich, nañ añ.	estos tres puntos parte de que yo digo, que yo.
121	Api' Dios jich chat, Dios jich Ñan	Tú, Dios Nuestro Padre, Dios Nuestra Madre,
122	ji ku'ba' dhi mas dhi puch kajidhat pui'ch buimgidhat	[incomprehensible]
123	sia ku <i>todo</i> , sia kuch komoker gɛ' k'n ñiokidhta	o sea que todo, sea como quiera hablamos fuerte
124	<i>porque</i> nach gu mai'kam tutu'm	porque parecemos borrachos
125	alh jum mamar, jum tajañi'ñ, suspulhi'ñ	tus hijos, tu descendencia, tus retoños
126	dhiñ jikulh na ya kia'pix ya pui' tu juanim	mi sobrino que aquí apenas está trabajando
126	peru gu' bhai bapup xi chu da'ngi	pero ya está agarrando
127	ja'xgi mas na gu' ya' nombrarix	no le hace, porque aquí está nombrado
128	gio gu' ya' cabildo dho	luego aquí en el cabildo pues
129	añ puñi' primero, na mit ya' jiñ bai	así yo primero, cuando me hablaron
130	mas pu champai' xidhutdhix iñ na ñich bhai' ba tu da	mas ni estaba bendito que ya aquí agarré
131	gu' dhi'giba' na pai' ma'n boy ya' pui' ba' jak up ba ji gii	ahora este que ya una vez ya cayó para acá
132	dho gu'r razon dho	pues hay razón
133	chamtu' nach jax kaich nach ach mo xi jam o'n	no decimos que nos dan flojera
133	o ku nach ach tu' xi jam ibhi'ñ, cham!	o que nosotros les tenemos miedo, no!
134	<i>solamente que</i> nach ach pui' jam pensarxi'ñ je Dios Jiñ Chat	solamente que nosotros así les pensamos Dios Nuestro Padre
135	Dios jiñ Ñan, pui' considerartudak	Dios Nuestra Madre, así considéranos
136	<i>ya que todo</i> puñi' bix ja aixim bhan na pui' chu mama	ya que todo [incomprehensible]
137	ja tajañi' tu su'mpulhi'	[incomprehensible]
138	gio ma'n gu tua'dam gui' na joidham jix abhar jum bhan	y una tua'dam que está bien bonita en ti
139	gio dhi sandarux pui' up jiñ bui kulh	y los soldados también [incomprehensible]
139	kukulsi nam pui' tu da'	nietos que así están agarrados
140	ja mamar	sus hijos
141	ja tajañi'ñ	su descendencia
142	tu' bheser	algún becerro
143	tu vak	alguna vaca
144	tur	un toro
145	uri jañ pui'p ya'ni, ji'ma'n jach alh pui' ja tut'tu	[incomprehensible]
146	cada quien ach alh pu'ñi alh jup tu bia'ich sia nar takarui'	cada quien así tenemos aunque sea [una] gallina
146	sia nar toxkolh	aunqe sea un puerco
147	sia na alh tu' alh gagox	aunque sea un perro
148	tu' alh mistuiñ na tu kuidar	aunque sea un gato que nos cuide
149	<i>es cierto</i> , cham ach dho dhiñh chamji'xkat	es cierto, nosotros solos nunca

150	solamente dhi' je nam alh pui' chu kuidar	solamente ellos que así cuidan
151	alh up ba jonkoichu' gu bhan no pai' ba ku	así pues jonkoichu' el coyote si por ahí se escucha
152	gu bix aixim bhan	todos los diferentes coyotes
152	nañ ba' añ pui'ñ abogar	por eso yo así abogo
153	sia gu menas bhan sia no de aquella	aunque sea poquito no de aquella
154	pui'ñ mo jam tidat pui' kaich	así yo les digo, así dicen
155	igəlh ba'	[incomprensible]
156	silhkam pui' moch <i>creer</i>	Cierto así nos creen
157	alh ji'ma'n darsa'ich alh dhi' na chich presentaru	sentamos algunos esto que presentamos
158	<i>ojala</i> ku gu' joidham pui'	ojala que así bonito
159	cha'p juanat tu botpoda'	que no nosmoleste algún gusano
159	tuimi'x, tu' baisilh, babok, bix aixim	un gusano del maíz, ni tejón, ni un mapache de ningún tipo
160	tu' kaxio, gu tu' bhan bipi'kat	alguna zorra, algún coyote, primeramente
161	pui' chu kumplir	así cumple
162	dhi' bix aixim bhan jañ ba añ pui' kaidha'	todos esos diferentes, por eso yo digo
163	sia alh gu <i>menas</i> bhan <i>no de aquella</i>	aunque sea en poquito no de aquella
164	kuñ ba' pui' ba jam kaichu'n dhi ma'n ñi'ok	por eso los hago escuchar esta una palabra
165	dhi gook, dhi baik, dhi makob	estas dos, estas tres, estos cuatro
165	Noa' gu silhkam	será cierto
166	nam ba'ch baga' los angeles temporales	que ya nos rieguen los ángeles temporales
167	<i>los angeles, los angeles nos guarden</i>	los ángeles, los ángeles nos guarden
168	nam bhamidir pui' ba tu dasa'	que de allá así lo dispongan
169	dhix chamam ja sa'skalhik	sus cinco cordilleras
170	dhix chamam ja oi'dha' ta'm	en sus cinco montañas
171	gio dhix chamam bipia ta'm	y en sus cinco manantiales
172	dhix chamam gə'gə'r bipia ta'm	en los cinco grandes manantiales
172	silhkam joidham jix abharum bhan pui' ba tum duñia'	de verdad se va a hacer bien bonito
173	je nach ya' pui' ka xi chu jojoi'ñ, dhi	que aquí lo estamos contemplando
174	<i>unos días o largo tiempo</i>	estos algunos días o largo tiempo
175	pu ja'xbui' bhan ba ta	[incomprehensible]
176	pui' nañ ba' añ pui' kaidha'	por eso yo así digo
177	u ku sia pu'ñi ma'n jiñ yooxchuk na ya' pui' chu juan	o aunque sea una flor mía que aquí así trabaja
178	ju alh up gagam <i>algun trabajo</i>	también fue a buscar algún trabajo
178	<i>alguna obra</i>	alguna obra
179	dho gu' ji' dho	pues también se fue
180	nañ jax pui' ba kaich, nañ cham dhih jup bua dhi tumiñ	como ya había dicho, que no hago solo el dinero
181	solamente nach alh pui' gagidhat	solamente que así vayamos buscando
182	tu rindirixka' je bix aixim bhan	va estar rindiendo en muchas cosas
183	pu'ñiñ ba' mo soi' tu maikalhdha	[incomprehensible]
184	ia dhiñ jikulh na pui' chu <i>jugar</i>	también mi sobrino que aquí está jugando
185	pasil pix mo pui' ji chum duñidha'	que fácil se vaya haciendo
185	pai' alh up ma ti tik'ka tu' bheser	por algún lado (alguna vez) llegó a preguntar algún becerro

186	dho gu' jix bhai' tu tat'da dho	pues se siente bien
187	ja bim jañ pui' jįmda'	con ellos así voy
188	ja bim jañ pui' chu a'gada'	con ellos así platico
189	ku bix ja aixim bhan	que en todos así diferente
190	jix bhai' chu tat'da tu' nañ kiis alh jiñ ñonob am	Se siente bien tener algo parado en mis manos
191	alh nañ pu'ñi alh bima'n pui' alh tu ñiokda'	que así con el así hable
191	bima'n jañ alh pui' jįmda'	con él así vaya
192	bix aixim bhan	diferentes cosas
193	<i>es igualmente como</i> alh ya' alh pu'ñi jam jįp bha ja jotxi	es igualmente como aquí que así así les mandó
194	ja mamar, ja tajañi', ja suspulh por bix	sus hijos, su descendencia, sus retoños
195	<i>sea que todo, a quien sea, a quien fuera</i>	o sea que todo, a quien sea, a quien fuera
196	sia ma'n cham ya ai	aunque sea uno no llegó
197	gook ja mįt ma faltaru	dos llegaron a faltar
198	baik ja mįt faltaru, dho gu' dhi' ma'n kat jup jich dhukat	faltaron tres, pues unos nos tiene así
198	<i>ni modo</i> queñ añ jax kai'ch, dhi' ba' bar aparti, cham	ni modo que yo diga, esos son ya aparte, no
199	<i>mejor</i> jach considerar, todo parejo, con todo cantidad	mejor consideramos todo parejo, con todo cantidad
200	jax bhan dhi ma'n ñi'ok, dhi gook, dhi baik, dhi makob	en esta una palabra, estas dos, estas tres, estas cuatro
201	dhix chamam ñi'ok, pui' jam matu'n.	estas cinco palabras, así les <i>matu'n</i> .



## APPENDIX 2

	O'dam	Español
1	<i>Por la señal de la Santa Cruz</i>	<i>Por la señal de la Santa Cruz</i>
2	<i>en nombre del Padre, del Hijo</i>	<i>en nombre del Padre, del Hijo</i>
3	<i>Espíritu Santo.</i>	<i>Espíritu Santo.</i>
4	Dios gɛ' kam jix o' jix dhukam Jich Chat	Dios Nuestro Padre bendito todo poderoso
5	gɛ' kam jix o' jix dhukam Jich Ñan	Nuestra Gran Madre bendita toda poderosa
6	Na xib kat ba' pui' tii jix chamam <i>puertas bhan</i>	Que en este momento, en las 5 puertas, así dijo
7	pui' ñio señor Santo San Pedro	así habló el Señor Santo San Pedro
8	que es portero del cielo	que es portero del cielo
9	<i>que es portero de la Gloria</i>	que es portero de la Gloria
10	Dho ma'n <i>parte</i> pui' mo bach ti	una parte ya nos vio así
11	dho kup'pio'kix gux chamam <i>puertas bhan</i>	pues están en las cinco puertas abiertas,
12	Jix chamam <i>llave</i> ki'n jum <i>abriru</i> , jum kukpio [...]	se abrió con cinco llaves, se abrió [inaudible]
13	dhi <i>tres colores mexicanos</i> .	esos tres colores mexicanos
14	Pui' bhai' tipich alh jum mamar, jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	ahí los viste a tus hijos, tus retoños, tu descendencia
15	<i>todo nación, todo el mundo</i> pich pui' ja'k tii dho dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	toda nación, todo el mundo así lo dijiste en esta plegaria.
16	Na pim pui' dhukat cham bia' <i>descanso</i>	Que de esa forma no tienen descanso
17	<i>sea de día, sea de noche</i>	sea día, sea noche
18	pui' cham jum <i>olvidar</i> ja pim	así no se olvidan [ustedes]
19	pui' pui'ch nii'ñ ja pim pui'ch <i>pastorear</i>	aún así nos ven todavía nos pastorean
20	na pim pui'ch kuidaru'	aún nos cuidan
21	dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
22	Kuba' ma'n parte	Pero, por otra parte
23	nach mo cham pui' dukat ba' mop ti nii'ñ,	nosotros no lo vemos así
24	cham jach ba' pui' dukat mop tu jojo'i'ñ.	por eso no lo apreciamos
25	l'mdat jach pui' jir jam i'midham	Invocar, así nosotros los invocamos
26	<i>de cualquier hora,</i>	a cualquier hora
27	<i>de cualquier tiempo</i>	en cualquier momento
28	<i>cualquier rato, cualquier mañana.</i>	[en] cualquier rato, [en] cualquier mañana
29	ti' nach gu' jir jum mamar,	mira que somos tus hijos
30	jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	tus retoños, tus descendientes
31	ti' nach gu' jir jum a'alhchuk je.	mira que somos tus niños
32	dhi' pui' jir jum dukam	es por esta razón
33	dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	en esta plegaria
34	Cham jach basi'n jam nanmik	No los encontramos allá
35	ja dagit ma'n kandhir, ma'n yooxi',	con una vela en la mano, una flor
36	alhi'ch chikulat ki'n bhan ma'n timkalh ki'n	poquito chocolate, con una tortilla
37	alhi'ch tuisap, alhi'ch sudai'	poquito pinole, poquita agua
38	gui' je nach gu' cham pui' dukat ba' mop ti nii'ñ	pero nosotros no lo vemos de esa manera
39	cham jach ba' pui' dukat ba' mop tu jojo'i'ñ	por eso no lo apreciamos de esa manera

40	pui' pix jach ti nñi'ñ na jix chu max,	así nada más miramos lo que se ve
41	pui' pix jach ji bapmigim	así nada más nos vamos levantando
42	ji xia'ñdhim	vamos amaneciendo
43	ba' gu'	y es así
44	dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
45	Dho gu' chi jum agim je nach basi'n jam tanit <i>algo</i>	A lo mejor se necesita que les pidamos algo allá
46	pui' jam tanda' gu tu' nach pui'ch <i>faltar</i> ,	así pedirles algo que nos falta
47	tu' nach <i>nesesitar</i> .	lo que necesitamos
48	gu' dhi' ba' ma'n <i>parte</i> .	en esta plegaria.
49	Soi' cham pui' dukat ba' mop ti nñi'ñ,	Humildemente así vivimos
50	Pui' cham pui' dukat ba' mop tu juruñdhim dho	así, de esta manera vamos pasando los días
51	dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria
52	Dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan, dhi' mi' pur <i>cuenta</i> dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	En esta plegaria ya es de la cuenta (de lo que estamos hablando) en esta plegaria
53	dhi'ñi alh jum mamar	estos tus hijos
54	dhi'ñi alh jum su'mpulh <i>presente este día</i>	estos tus retoños presentes este día
55	gu ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan na pich aixim bhan ya' pui' jich tibañ:	por una parte nos bajaste [del cielo] a lo difícil:
56	nach mo jir jich xidhut'da dam	que nos ponemos benditos
57	nach pui' jir jich bordarkam bhan	que nos guardamos (nos ponemos benditos [en general])
58	nach pui' jir jich biñkadam,	que hacemos nuestro <i>biñak</i>
59	aixim bhan.	de muchas formas
60	Jix dha'ram bhan ja pich ya' jich tibañ	nos bajaste a un precio muy alto
61	jix dha'ram na pich ya' jich do'ñcho Jiñ chat, Jiñ ñan	por un precio muy alto nos dejaron aquí mi Padre, mi Madre
62	a gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan nach pui' jir xiotalh ti ni'dam	por una parte somos bailadores del mitote,
63	pui' tu kapalhim tu dam	que hacemos <i>kapalhium</i>
64	pui' tu ia'ntadham	que somos <i>ia'ntadam</i>
65	nach pui' tu <i>bendecir</i> kam ji	que bendecimos
66	alh ma'n titnip Alhi'ch titnip Jich dhukam Jich Chat	un jilote, un jilotito Nuestro Padre bendito
67	alhi'ch Titnip Jich dukam Jich Ñan	un jilotito Nuestra Madre bendita
68	na pai' dhuk pui' maxilhia' gu' chi alh na pui' bendisiru' ji.	cuando aparezca [el Dios-jilote] lo vas a bendecir
69	dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	en esta plegaria.
70	Pui' jir jum dukam.	Es por eso
71	dhi' pu'ñi <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tu a'gidha' dhi'ñi	por esta cuenta que seguimos hablando
72	jum mamar, dhi'ñi jum su'mpulh,	tus hijos, estos tus retoños
73	jum tajañi' nam ya'p tu'i' <i>presente</i>	tus descendientes que están aquí presentes
74	jumai takab dir bhan	desde el otro ayer
75	jumai <i>tiempo</i> bhan na mit pui' xim batbichdhak'	desde el otro tiempo que se bañaron
76	pui' xi chu a'gak ja mit je	así lo dejaron hablado
77	dhi' alh pui' ma'n <i>parte</i> .	en esta plegaria.
78	Na mit pui' ba ji chu jikiamit pui'ñi alh gu bopot,	Que así empezaron a cortar el <i>otate</i> ,
79	pu'ñi alh alhi'ch baapak,	así poquito carrizo
80	alhi'ch marmillon bhan,	con poquito bermellón

81	pui' ji chu ua'nak ja mit.	así lo escribieron
82	pui' ba' pui' xi poneruk ja mit,	así lo dejaron puesto
83	alh jich dhukam ja toki' bhan na mit ba' mo ba jichu pensaru	en el algodón bendito entonces ya nos pensaron
84	nai' mit mo guguk nai' mo ji pensaru mit jix bipiñak ja bopto' bhan	que se pararon y empezaron a pensar
85	pui' kai'ch am, mi' alh nam pai' tii dara:	así dicen, ahí donde están sentados:
86	¿pach ba' ja'k bhiya'?	¿a dónde nos vamos?
87	¿pach ba' ja'k tu ga'mpu' <i>remedio</i> ?	¿a dónde vamos a buscar el remedio?,
88	¿pach ba' ja'k tu ga'mpo' alhi'ch alh bachichil	¿a dónde vamos a buscar poquito guachichil
89	alh tutkulh jagim?	hojas de <i>tutkulh</i> ?
90	<i>A que mano</i>	A que "mano"
91	ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
92	Pui' mit ba' muja'k up ba jim pensarumit	Por eso ya empezaron a pensar para allá
93	ñañ alh pai'p jiñ tulhiñ añ alh <i>pobre querencia</i> alh añ ñañ pai'p ji xia'ñdhim ñañ pai'p juruñdha' je	donde estoy sufriendo, en mi pobre casa, donde estoy amaneciendo, donde estoy atardeciendo
94	dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> .	esta plegaria.
95	Ba' ma'n <i>parte</i> jimdat ba' mi'dhir ja'k jiñ sanop ja mit bhai' jim kubriru	Por una parte, viniendo a mi lado se empezaron a cubrir
96	ji dhagit am, ji chi isak guch chat ji chi isak guch Nan	trayendo en la mano, sembró Nuestro Padre, sembró Nuestra Madre
97	[sic]	[Inaudible]
98	pu'ñi ba' gu' mu ja resibiru ñich	así los recibí
99	<i>con mucho gusto, con mucho cariño</i>	con mucho gusto, con mucho cariño
100	cham ja ñech ku' ja iobo'	no los mandé de vuelta
101	ja resiburu ñich, na gu' jix bhai' jup dukam	los recibí, porque es lo correcto
102	pu tu mañich <i>parte, cuenta,</i>	asi "di parte" [así di] cuenta,
103	ji bipi' ji buak gu <i>santo</i> korre	poniendo delante el Santo Correo
104	bibalh Jich Chat, Bibalh Jich Ñan.	Nuestro Padre Tabaco, Nuestra Madre Tabaco
105	Dhi' ñich pui' ja resiburu	así los recibí
106	ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
107	<i>Ma'n parte</i>	Por una parte
108	nam pui' kai'chim nam sap gu' jum guardarar'	porque llegaron diciendo que se iban a guardar
109	nam sap pui' yaja'p gagaidhir jup darka'	que van a estar aquí todos juntos
110	dhi'ñ ya' pui' jir jum dukam.	es por esta razón
111	jir ja <i>cuenta</i> ma'n <i>parte</i> jir ja cuenta gu ja su'mpulh, ja tajañi'	es su cuenta, por una parte, es la cuenta de sus retoños, de su descendencia
112	na mit sap champai' up ja ti je	que nunca los vieron
113	na mit ba' sap champai' up ja conoseru	que nunca conocieron
114	ñañ jax chu'm <i>cara</i> ua'kat	la cara que traían
115	nam jax chu'm buibas ua'kat	la cara que traían
116	nam jax chu ñiokit	como hablaban
117	nam jax tu kantaru'k	como cantaban
118	nam jax tu giku'ndat	como chiflaban
119	cham ja mit sap ja ti dho ja bupui bhan	que no los vieron a los ojos
120	pui' pix na tu tad'da'	así nada más lo que sienten [los dolientes]

121	pui' xix chu koko'kor	así nada más tienen dolor
122	dhi'ñi jam nanan, na ba'p tui'dhi'.	esta, su madre que ya está en esto [el costumbre]
123	dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
124	E gu ma'n <i>parte</i>	Por una parte
125	<i>pobres niños, pobres angelitos, pobres almas penadas</i>	pobres niños, pobres angelitos, pobres almas penadas
126	dhi' mit ba' pui', pui' ja xidhutdara' bhan ja'k ji sulh je	que así, así regresaron mediante “este costumbre”
127	dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	en esta plegaria.
128	Pui' ja aich'dhak ja mit dhi <i>diez días</i> ,	Así completando estos diez días
129	<i>de quince días</i> pui' ji aich'dhak,	quince días completados
130	pui' ji aich'dhak <i>dieciséis días</i> pui' ji kontaru'	así completaron dieciséis días así se contaron
131	<i>por aapi'm jam cuenta pobres niños</i>	por cuenta de ustedes pobres niños
132	<i>pobres angelitos, pobres penados</i>	pobres angelitos, pobres penados
133	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukt	es por eso
134	tu' ba' xib bhai' pup mati'	ahora así se ve
135	xib jam titnora' bhan,	en sus horcones
136	dhi gok, dhi baik, dhi makob	estos dos, estos tres, estos cuatro
137	dhi ma'n ja gaikam bhan	en un travesaño
138	dhi gok ja gaikam bhan	en dos travesaños
139	dhi ma'n jam ta'mlasi'	en una tabla
140	dhi gok, dhi baik, dhi makob, dhix chamam jam ta'mlasi' bhan	en dos, en tres, en cuatro, en sus cinco tablas
141	jimdat ba' pui' ba maxir alh jix jip jam mai'	caminando así se vio su maguey frío
142	jix dha'rkam jam ibgi'	su caro magueyito
143	bhai' pui' bap tu'i' jix jip jam pilas	ahí ya están sus ollitas frías
144	na pim ba' pui' ki'n up ba xim jupsusai.	para que con ello se rocíen
145	na pu'ñi pim xi i'ya' pim palhip	para que así tomen poquito
146	usu bhai' pai' pui' jix mati' alh sudai',	por ahí también hay agua
147	bhai' pup mati' ma'n yooxi'	también hay una flor
148	bhai' pup mati' alhi'ch timkalh	también hay tortillitas
149	dhi' ba' pim pui' ba' xi chu jugai je	para que así coman, así coman
150	dhi' pim pui' xi chu jugai	que coman así
151	<i>este día, este mañana</i>	este día, esta mañana
152	nap ya' pui'p mati' gu jam arpus	que aquí también se ve su morral
153	napim alh pui'p xi kusbi	que así se lo lleven colgado
154	yaja'p pui'p bhiya' pim na pai' kik gu Xia'lhik kam Jich Chat	para que se vayan por donde está parado Nuestro Padre Señor del Amanecer
155	gu xia'lhik kam Jich Ñan.	Nuestra Madre del Amanecer
156	cha'pim bhan jum kejarut	no se quejen de esto
157	cha'pim ba' ku' jimmit	no retrocedan
158	cha'pim ba' suandat	no lloren
159	cha'pim ba' <i>cualquier</i> jup buidhat dhi Dios jam i'mda'	no desprecien su alma de Dios
160	dhi'r pu <i>cuenta</i>	por esta cuenta
161	nañ pai' dhuk bhai' ba jam yamarda'	cuando yo los esté llamando
162	nañ pai' dhuk bha jam titga'	cuando yo los esté nombrando

163	nam pai' dhuk jam jiñkoidha'	cuando yo les esté gritando
164	nañ pai' dhuk ya'ni jam bañio'ra'	cuando los llame con la mano
165	jix jiki' bhan na pim bhai' pu ti ti'mpo'	se vienen alegres a ver
166	ya'ni dir ja'k ja pim bha bhiya' na pai' kik gu Jurnip kam jich Soi'kam	para que se vengan de donde está parado Nuestro Padre Humilde del Atardecer
167	Jurnip kam Jich Chat	Nuestro Humilde Padre del Atardecer
168	dhi' bhai' pui' jam makia <i>permiso</i> na pim bhai' xi chi ti'mpoi dhi'ñi <i>horas</i> bhan.	así él les dará permiso de que vengan a ver en estas horas
169	bhai' pui' na pim xi chu jugajii ja'pni <i>a las cinco,</i> <i>a las seis</i>	para que coman ahí como a las cinco, a las seis
170	<i>a las siete de la tarde, a las ocho de la tarde</i>	a las siete de la tarde, a las ocho de la tarde
171	ach pui' kai'ch na " <i>de la tarde</i> "	nosotros decimos " que de la tarde"
172	api'm na pim gu' makam ba tu da'ngi	ustedes lo toman diferente
173	<i>desde las ocho de la noche, algo así.</i>	desde las ocho de la noche, algo así.
174	pui'ñi <i>cuenta</i> nach ba' mo tu mat'tu'n.	por esta cuenta estamos dando a conocer
175	e pimit bach umuagit	por eso nos contrataron
176	<i>pobres niños, almas penados.</i>	pobres niños, almas penadas
177	cha'pim ku' buada' gu jam i'mda'	no desprecien su alma
178	cha'pim nai' ti kɛjidha'	no vengan escuchando
179	cha'pim nai' tu kakeda'	no escuchen
180	nai' na mo tum jiku'nda'	por allá que chiflan
181	na nai' ji chum ñokia'	cuando se empieza a hablar
182	na pim bhai'dhir pai'dhuk bhai' ji jimia' je jix jiki' bhan	cuando de allá se empiecen a venir contentos
183	cha'pim nai' mo jum kejarut	no se vengan quejando
184	cha'pim nai' ti kakɛjidha' tu' ia'tda'	no vengan escuchando las mentiras
185	na gu' ya' pui' jir jum dukam	porque aquí así es
186	silh je na pim bhai' pu bhiya'	vénganse todo derecho
187	mi' pur <i>cuenta.</i>	por esta cuenta.
188	Dhi' pu <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' ya' tu a'gim oras bhan	Sobre esa cuenta estamos aquí hablando ahorita
189	dhi'dhi <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo ja'k up sulh je	por esta cuenta ya lo estamos haciendo
190	xib ba' <i>con pocos elementos</i>	ahora con pocos elementos
191	ap nap jir bipi' kam	tu que eres el primero (el primero que falleció)
192	<i>pobre niño, pobre angelito, pobre alma penada</i>	pobre niño, pobre angelito, pobre alma penada
193	na mit alh jum soi'ntai	que te dieron un becerro
194	ma'n alh sai' ipoñ pui' tajañi'ñ	un animalito que come zacate
195	nap ba' gu' bipi' pui'p xi buaji	para que te lo lleves por delante
196	nap ba' ki'n pui' jix jikgidha'	para que vayas contento con él
197	bipi'dha' pim	llévenlo pastoreando
198	ma'n parte dhi jam jaaduñ	por una parte tus hermanos
199	nap ja bim pui' jimchu'	con los que vienes
200	dhi' bix dhi <i>ambos</i> bhan ja pim pui' kuidartun'da'	todos, ambos vayan cuidándolo
201	na jax ba' gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan. Mo ma tu ta chich, <i>por ejemplo:</i>	por ejemplo, si por una parte compramos:
202	añ ma tu ta ma'n gu tur	yo compro un toro
203	oso tu' ma'n bheser, oso tu' kabai.	o un becerro, o un caballo

204	tienike nach ji'k mi' ba dara tienike nach bixdhit nii'ñdha'	tenemos que cuidarlo todos los que estamos ahí
205	nach bixdhit kuidarda'	cuidarlo entre todos nosotros
206	dhi' pu'ñi jir jum dukam	es por esa razón
207	bix dhit na pim tu kuidartu'nda'	tienen que ir cuidándolo entre todos
208	bix dhit na pim ti niidhat na cham tu' jam pasaru'	tienen que ir cuidándose entre todos para que no les pase nada
209	dhi' jix buam jum dukam je dhi'.	porque eso es malo
210	Na mit ba' ba jam kua'ñxi	Ya les calentaron
211	mi' ba' ji'ma'n <i>taco</i> pim xi chu jugai	ahí un taco a cada uno para que coman
212	dhi' pim ji'man timkalh ki'n xi chu jugai	ahí coman con una tortilla cada uno
213	ba' pu'ñip dukam, ma'n <i>parte</i> , dhi'ñi <i>cuenta</i>	por esta razón, por una parte, esta cuenta
214	na pim pui' xi chu jugai	para que coman
215	<i>con ánimo, con cariño, con amistad</i>	con ánimo, con cariño, con amistad
216	cha'pim jax jum agat	no se preocupen
217	na gu' cham tu' dhim gi'kora'	porque su papás no
218	chamtu' na mit mupai' jam tut'tu	no los dejaron abandonados por allá en
219	jax chu'm bapoicha'm	algun camino
220	jax chu'm <i>carretera</i>	alguna carretera
221	jax chu'm gio'ntir	algunos llanos
222	jax chu'm u'xchir	algun bosque
223	jax chu'm jodaichir	algun lugar pedregoso
224	jax chu'm alh inpiernos bhan	en algunos infiernos
225	jam tut'tu mit dhi jam gi'kora'.	los abandonaron sus papás.
226	Cham ji cham' agit	No es así
227	am sap nam puchu'm ji xian'dhixka'	[sus padres] no querían que amanecieran así [muertos]
228	jix agat am na pim ya' pui' ja tigia' git dhi jam gi'kora'	sus padres querían que estuvieran aquí con ellos
229	gu' nada mas na jam tagib max jix buam jum dukam:	nada más que algo malo se les atravesó:
230	parkigam	la perdición
231	¡Ah! Kugu' ma'n <i>parte</i>	¡Ah! Pero por una parte
232	pu'ñi dhi jam gi'kora' na mit pui' ba bhii coraje	a sus padres ya les dio coraje
233	na mit pui' ba bhii sintiruda'	ya les dio tristeza
234	pui' kai'chit nai oipoda':	y así andan diciendo:
235	"pai' nañ alh <i>norte</i> ja'k bhiya",	"me voy a ir al norte"
236	ke'ñ añ Estados Unidos ja'k bhiya'. <i>A que caray</i>	o "yo me voy a Estados Unidos". A que caray
237	gu' dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i>	por una parte
238	<i>igual</i> dhi' mit ba' mu tu jam bhiñolh,	igual y ellos se los cargaron
239	tu jam bhiñolh ja mit dhi jam gi'kora'	se los cargaron sus padres
240	dhi jam mamar	a sus hijos
241	dhi' mit ba' bhan tu ji <i>los pecados, el coraje, el sentido</i>	a ellos se fueron los pecados, el coraje, la tristeza
242	dhi' mi' pui' <i>cuenta</i> .	es por esta cuenta.
243	Dhi' cham je napim jax jum agidhat dhix jiki' bhan	Por eso ustedes no se preocupen, estén contentos
244	cha'pim ku' jimmit gu jam i'mda'	no desprecien su alma

245	xi dhasai pim <i>valor</i> , xi dhasai <i>ánimo</i>	dénse valor, déense ánimo
246	ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	es por esta razón, por una parte.
247	Dhi'ba' ja'xni na pim xim i'kii, <i>a la una, a las dos de la tarde</i> .	Esto para que después se corten ustedes a la una, a las dos de la tarde
248	na pim ba' xim ikii,	para que se corten ustedes
249	pui' xim medirui gu <i>un dedo, cada dedo, cada uno</i>	para que se midan un dedo, cada dedo, cada uno
250	dhi'ñi ba' pui'r jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	es por esta razón, en esta plegaria.
251	Na gu' chi api'm mi'ja'k up bhiya' je <i>abajo la tierra</i>	A lo mejor ustedes se irán debajo de la tierra
252	dhi' pui' jir jum dukam	es por eso
253	cham ka jai'ch <i>permiso</i> , cham ka jai'ch <i>licencia</i> na pim ya'pai' ka ja kobxi'ñdha' dhi jam gi'kora'	ya no hay permiso, ya no hay licencia de merodear a su padres
254	<i>porqué</i> na mit ya' ba ji tanok	porque ya empezaron a tener sed
255	ya' ba ji bhio'mo, ma ji sufrirumit	ya tienen hambre, ya empezaron a sufrir
256	ma ji ua'mamit alh dhi jam gi'kora api'm jam <i>cuenta</i>	ya empezaron sus padres a estar en hambruna por cuenta de ustedes
257	<i>pobres niños almas penados</i>	pobres niños almas penadas.
258	dhi' ba' pu'ñi pim alh xi pensarui <i>este día, este mañana</i>	para que piensen en esto este día, esta mañana
259	e gu' dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
260	Na ba' bhai' pai'p kik Alhi Dagim Jich Chat	Por ahí está parado Nuestro Padre Alhi Dagim Jich Chat
261	alhii bhammi dagim Jich Chat	allá está arriba Nuestro Padre Alhi Dagim
262	<i>mejor</i> jap ja resibiru' dhim mamar	mejor recibe a tus hijos
263	dhi Santo Refugio, María Santísima.	Santo Refugio, María Santísima.
264	nap ja resibiru' dhim mamar	que recibas a tus hijos
265	su'mpulh, tajañi'	tus retoños, tus descendientes
266	dhi' nam gu' cham pui' ka duñia' am dhi'	porque ya no van a hacer eso
267	cham pui' ka xi ja dañia' am dhi ja gi'kora'	ya no van a tomar cariño a sus padres
268	<i>porqué</i> na mo bax xijai	porque ya está difícil
269	jax ja chich gi ba kœ	pues como ya escuchamos
270	ma'n ya'ni ja'p tii da alhii je gu ubii	hay una niña aquí sentada
271	gilhim jix bhana' je	muy enojona
272	gilhim alh suak je	llora mucho
273	jah ke!, gu' dhi' mas bam duñia' am	jah qué caray!, van a estar peor
274	no' pim jax kai'ch na pim bha jimda'	si ustedes dicen que van a venir
275	no' pim jax kai'ch nam ja'k jam iobo'	si ustedes dicen [piden] que los regresen
276	gu' dhi' chamtu' pui' ka duñia' je	eso ya no se va a hacer
277	na mi' jax dhukat jap ya' ja makda' <i>corajes</i>	Ya nada más les vas a dar coraje [a los deudos]
278	nach ya' mak gu ja sintiruda'	que le damos sentimiento
279	<i>mejor</i> nap ja resibiru'	mejor que los recibas
280	dhi jam tat, jam nan	a su padre, su madre
281	ya' na pai' kik gu Xia'lhik kam Jich chat	aquí donde está parado Nuestro Señor padre del Amanecer
282	gu Xia'lhik kam Jich ñan	Nuestra Madre del Amanecer.
283	<i>mejor</i> jap ja resibiru' dhim mamar	mejor recibe a tus hijos
284	dhim su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	tus retoños, tu descendencia

285	eso es lo que estoy pidiendo en este momento.	<i>dhi' ja'paneñ mop kaidha' dhi oras bhan.</i>
286	Dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> , ya'm <i>disculpar</i> am	Por una parte, se están disculpando
287	ba' mi' pui'p mati' jam bakuañkar	Y así se ve "su jabón" (su dinero)
288	mi' pui'p mati' <i>mil quinientos más feria</i>	así se ven mil quinientos más feria
289	pui'p mati' na pim bhan pui' xim i'butdat	para que con ello se diviertan
290	na pim pui' alh xi u'jii tu' basi'n ki'n up ba tu tañia' tu' na pui' jam <i>faltar</i>	para que se lo lleven y más adelante compren lo que les haga falta
291	tu' na pui' alh <i>necesitar</i> a pim	lo que necesiten
292	mi' alh ji'ma'n pes ja pim xi jam repartirui	ahí se reparten de a un peso (en partes iguales)
293	ji'ma'n ma'mkob tumñi'x ja pim xim repartirui	se reparten de a un tostón
294	pui' xi u'jii pim	así llévenselo
295	pui' pim ki'n tu jugia' basi'n pai' damdir	para que coman con eso por allá arriba
296	dhi' pui' jir jum dukam.	es por esta razón.
297	Ji'k nam sobraru' gu' chi añ alh ki'n up tu jugia'	Lo que sobre será para que yo coma
298	tu'ñ <i>refresco</i> jañ ki'n up ba tu tañia'	para comprar mi refresco
299	tu' nañ pui' jix ña	lo que quiera comer
300	tu' jiñ susak jañ ki'n up ba tu tañia'	para comprar mis huaraches
301	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi. Ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	es por esta razón. En esta plegaria.
302	E kuba' ma'n pui' jix jiki' bhan a pim ba' mo pui' jiñ kaya'	Por eso escúchenme contentos, con disposición
303	<i>pobres niños, pobres angelitos, almas penadas.</i>	pobres niños, pobres angelitos, almas penadas.
304	dhi'm ba'm disculparumit	ellos ya se disculparon
305	jurarik ja mit dho dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	ya juraron esta parte
306	pui' tii tu a'gamit cham aixkam	así hablaron aunque sin elocuencia ni sabiduría
307	cham kabalkam ba' dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	no muy cabalmente por una parte
308	ja'pni pui'r jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	Es por esta razón, por una parte
309	ea gu' ma'n parte bhan.	en esta plegaria.
310	Alh ma'n <i>pobre tío</i>	Un pobre tío
311	<i>compañero</i> alh chio'ñkam jiñ chatalh	compañero <i>chio'ñkam jiñ chatalh</i> ,
312	alh ubii kam jiñ chatalh	<i>alh ubii kam jiñ chatalh</i>
313	pui' alh up tii tu da' gu mamra'n	que tiene también agarrados a sus hijos
314	alh su'mpulh ga'n	a sus retoños
315	ampix ba' pui'x tu bhata'	todo ha estado marchito
316	ampix lastimarix	todo ha estado lastimado
317	ampix ba' pui'x chu gibio'rix dhi Dios tu i'mda'	Su Alma de Dios ha estado golpeada
318	ampix pui' jix chu ga'rix gu ja i'mda'	ha estado vendida su alma
319	nam mi tii mai' ti nii'ñ	eso por lo que han pasado
320	<i>pobres, pobres muchachos, pobre angelito.</i>	pobres, pobres muchachos, pobre angelito
321	na bhai' pai' pui' tii nai' <i>estudiar</i> am	que por allá están estudiando
322	ma'n tii <i>estudiar</i>	uno está estudiando
323	ma'n ba' mop tu juan,	uno está trabajando
324	ma'n ba' sap bhai' pix pu oiri, ku <i>nada</i> ampix	y que uno nada más está ahí, "perdiendo el tiempo"
325	ampix pui' jix o'n am	nada más tienen flojera
326	oso jam komoker sap xi kai'chit	o sólo están discutiendo (entre ellos)
327	sap komoker ja mit pu'ñi mam da'ngi	o sólo están peleando
328	pui' ba' pix ji busañ nam cham jir jum jaja'nim	que no se respetan como hermanos



329	nai' xim basilarut am	andan vacilándose
330	komoker jam xim titid'dai	se dicen cualquier cosa
331	ja <i>que</i> mano!	¡Ah que mano!
332	ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
333	Gu' ba' xib	Y ahora
334	ma'n <i>parte</i> nap ja io'mda'	una plegaria [para] que los consueles
335	ya' pui' kai'ch am dhi ja gi'kora'	eso dicen aquí sus padres
336	ya' soi' kai'ch dhi ja tat	lo dice su padre humildemente
337	ya' soi' kai'ch dhi ja nan	lo dice su madre humildemente
338	jix a' am sap nam jix bhai' jum <i>portar</i> ka'	quieren que se porten bien
339	dhi <i>pobres niños, pobres muchachos</i>	estos pobres niños, pobres muchachos
340	ja pe sap na gi'rixkat pui' ba tajañix ka'	que crezcan y ya tengan hijos
341	ya' ja makia' <i>mano</i> ,	aquí les den la mano
342	ja makia' am sap <i>servicio</i>	les den servicio
343	nam tu juana'	que trabajen
344	ya' alh nam pai' up tu gi'ñdhix	aquí donde viven
345	dhi ja tat, dhi ja nan	su padre, su madre
346	nam unirixka' pui' gi'rai	que crezcan unidos
347	pui' tu tañixka'	esté concedido
348	pui' tu juana' am	que trabajen
349	pai'dhuk ja <i>barbechos</i> bhan	algún día en sus barbechos
350	a dho gu' dhi'r ma'n pui' ja mataima'n	porque ese es su nixtamal
351	ja makia' je <i>mano</i>	dales la mano
352	no' mit jaxdhukat pui' [b]am gastaru	por si acaso ya se desgastaron
353	nam pai'dhuk jir i'lhichka' jia	cuando eran niños
354	dho gu' nai' jimda' am nam pui' tu gagidha' <i>remedio</i>	han ido buscando remedio
355	nam jix a' nam jix ki' pui' ji xia'ñdhixka'	porque quieren amanecer sanos
356	nam jix a' nañ jix ki' pui' juruñdhixka' dhi ja mamar	porque quieren que sus hijos atardezcan sanos
357	dhi ja su'mpulh	sus retoños
358	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi'ñi dhiñ <i>parte</i>	esta es la razón de esta plegaria
359	e gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	en esta plegaria.
360	Ma'n na pui' jix koxi' na pui' jix narankas	Uno que tiene koxiste, que tiene naranjas
361	ya'dir pui' kax ampararixchu'da'	de aquí vaya amparado
362	chakui ba' tu' duñia'	que todavía no le pase algo
363	chakui ba' tu' pasaru'	que todavía no le pase algo
364	<i>porque faltar tener la mera verdad</i>	porque falta tener la mera verdad
365	gu <i>oficio</i> ga'n	[de] su oficio
366	dhi' ba' pui' na <i>faltar</i>	eso falta aún
367	kugu' dhi' mi' pui' ka xi ampararixchu'nda'	pero que aún vaya amparado
368	chakui tu' pasaru'	que todavía no le pase algo
369	chakui tu' duñia'	que todavía no le suceda algo
370	chakui tabha'n jax jum duñia' mas buam jum dukam.	que todavía no se le atravesase algo malo
371	ya' nam pui' tu oipo <i>trocas, camionetas</i>	aquí que transitan trocas, camionetas.
372	chakui ba' mo tu' duñia'	todavía no le suceda algo.

373	Ep ja kuidariñ Jiñ Chat Santo San Miguel	A ver cuídalos mi Padre Santo San Miguel
374	e ba'ñ <i>ayudar Señor Santo San Pedro</i>	a ver ayúdame Señor Santo San Pedro,
375	<i>portero del cielo, de la gloria</i>	portero del cielo, de la Gloria.
376	dhi' ba'mi' nap ja apoyaru' jum mamar, jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	ahí para que apoyes a tus hijos, tus retoños, tus descendientes
377	dhi'ñi up ja <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tiip tu a'gichu'	es por esta cuenta que estamos intentando hablar
378	<i>pobre tio compañero.</i>	pobre tío compañero.
379	E ku <i>más</i> pui' jix jiki' bhan pui' jiñ kaya'	Escúcheme contento con disposición
380	jix jiki' bhan pui' jiñ atenderu'	atiéndame contento
381	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	es por esta razón, esta plegaria.
382	<i>Ora</i> dhi' nañ ya' pui'p tui'dhi' <i>presente</i> :	Ahora esto en lo que estoy presente (el discurso y/o la curación):
383	ma'n alh <i>pobre tio compañero</i>	un pobre tio compañero
384	na pui'p tu da' alh mamra'n	que tiene agarrados a sus hijos
385	na pui'p tu da' gu tajañga'n	que tiene agarrados a sus descendientes
386	<i>con toda cantidad, con toda general</i>	con toda cantidad, con toda general
387	dhi' ma'n <i>parte bhan</i> .	en esta plegaria.
388	Na sap pui' bhai'p ja da' alh makob ja mamar	Que tiene agarrados a sus cuatro hijos
389	ja su'mpulh, ja tajañi'	sus retoños, sus descendientes
390	<i>de cada uno</i> nam jax pui' tu da'	de cada uno como lo tienen agarrado
391	jix bhata' bhan pui' ji xia'ñdhim	va amaneciendo marchito
392	jix bhata' bhan bha juruñdhim dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i>	va pasándola marchito, por una parte.
393	Dhi'ñi ba' <i>cuenta</i> pui' pu tu formarumit	Es por esta cuenta, que así formaron
394	alchi'ch alh jix dhuk ja uxia' bhan,	poquita bendición en su vara
395	jix dhuk ja biñak bhan;	bendición en su <i>biñak</i>
396	pui' tu formarumit nam ba' bhan pui' jum sisap ka'	así lo hicieron para sostenerse de ellas
397	nam ba' ki'n jum palhbui'ñchu'nda' nai' ja'p nam pai' oipoda'	para que se vayan ayudando por allá que andan
398	nam pui' paxiaridha	que pasean
399	pai' no' mit ma paxiara pai' kicham	si llegan a ir a pasear a alguna casa
400	dhi' tienike na ja uxia' ki'n jum palbuidha' am	se van a tener que ayudar con su vara
401	Ki'n jum palhbuidha' no't tu' gagox bhai' ji mi	Se van a ayudar si se viene un perro corriendo
402	oso tu' kaxio bhai' ji mi, oso ku bhan bhai ji mi	o se viene corriendo una zorra o si viene corriendo un coyote
403	dho gu' dhi' ba' ki'n jum palhbui'ñchu'nda' am	con eso es con lo que se van a ayudar
404	a gu' ma'n <i>parte</i>	en una parte
405	up a' ma'n <i>camioneta</i> up bia'.	tiene una camioneta
406	gu <i>pobre persona, pobre ciudadano</i> biñkada	la pobre persona, pobre ciudadano le hizo un <i>biñak</i>
407	mi' pup da gu biñakga'n gu <i>troca</i>	ahí se quedó el <i>biñak</i> de la troca
408	jia gui' na bhan oiri	en la que anda
409	na pui' kai'ch na sap jix ki' jimda'	que funcione bien
410	chamtu' <i>mas</i> ka xi gakidha' ma'n aseit	que ya no se seque el aceite
411	oso ma'n cham xi gakidha' gu gasolin	que no se seque la gasolina
412	oso <i>aceite de frenos</i>	o el aceite de frenos
413	dhi' pu'ñi kaidha' dho gu' ba biñkai je ma'n gu <i>troca</i> ga'n	eso es lo que está pidiendo, ya le hizo <i>biñak</i> a su troca
414	na jix a' na sap jix ki' bhan oirida'	que quiere andar bien en ella

415	na sap jix a' na jix ki' bhan paxiarda'	que quiere pasear bien en ella
416	dhi'ñi dhi <i>cuenta</i> , ja'pane pir jum dukat bhan	en esta cuenta, es por esta razón.
417	Ma tu a'gachich dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> up	Ya hablamos también por esta parte
418	ora ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	ahora en esta plegaria.
419	<i>Este persona, este ciudadano</i>	Esta persona, este ciudadano
420	<i>ma'n ya'p ba ji bus</i>	ya salió otro aquí
421	ma'n alh gu <i>señor</i>	un señor
422	e dho gu' cham pai' jai'ch gu <i>toro</i>	no hay un toro
423	añ ya' tañxi ñich ma'n <i>favor</i>	yo aquí pedí un favor para él
424	<i>o mejor</i> bhai' pai'p dara am gu <i>familias</i> ga'n	a lo mejor por ahí están sus familiares
425	bhai' pai' dara am mamra'n	por ahí están sus hijos
426	mo ba' chamtu'p ja duñida'	que nos les suceda nada
427	chamtu'p ja pasaru'.	que nada les pase
428	ke' ma'n <i>parte</i> nañ up xi chi ni'ñ	una parte que yo mismo veo
429	<i>esa persona yo la conozco, hemos conocido</i>	esa persona yo la conozco, nos hemos conocido
430	mi'ñi na pui' mati' gu dai Jich Chat	por ahí está Nuestro Padre el Fuego Sagrado
431	dai jich ñan	Nuestra Madre [del Fuego Sagrado]
432	dho gu' mu ja'k up gixchu'nda' alh ma'n ku'a' ki'n bhan,	siempre esta cumpliendo con leña
433	alh ma'n yooxi' ki'n bhan	con florecitas
434	alh ma'n timaichara' bhan	con tamales
435	nañ ba' pui' kai'ch nañ ya' ja biñkada'	por eso estoy diciendo que les voy a hacer su <i>biñak</i>
436	na ma'n <i>troca</i> bhai'p kis	[para ]la troca que tiene ahí parada
437	kuba' chamtu'p omkidha'	para que no se vaya a averiar
438	jix jiki' bhan	contento y con disposición
439	<i>igualmente</i> chamtu' pasaru',	Igualmente no le pase nada [malo]
440	chamtu' duñidha' je dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	que no le pase nada. En esta plegaria.
441	Jε' ba' gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	Así, en ésta plegaria.
442	Ji'k pes mi'p ba ti	Ya puso unos cuantos pesos
443	e ba' ma'n jix jiki' bhan	asi contento y con disposición
444	dhi' ba' bhan pui' tu tan <i>favor</i>	es por eso que está pidiendo favor
445	tu tan alhi'ch duadhi'	pide poquito alivio
446	na ba' gu' chamtu' ka xi pasaru'	para que no le pase nada
447	cham tu' tu duñidha'	no les suceda nada
448	na ba' gu' pui' ka bia' <i>valor</i> , jix bhai' tu tad'da'	para que aún tenga valor, se sienta bien
449	jape nap ilhi'ch jup xi chañxidhai gux dhuadhi'	mejor pide para él poquito remedio
450	ja pe nap ilhi'ch jup xi chañxidhai ilhi'ch alivio	mejor pide para él poquito alivio
451	jix dhuadhi'	es remedio
452	ja'pni'p jir jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	esta es la razón, en esta plegaria.
453	Dhi'ñi <i>con todo</i>	Esto con todos
454	<i>general</i> nam ji'k ya' pui'p tui'dhi'	en general los que están aquí
455	tu da' am <i>cada familia</i>	y sus respectivas familias
456	pu'ñi alh cada nam jax pai' dar	así cada familia, como estan asentadas
457	Nat gu' pu'ñi alh jich do'ñcho [Dios a] cada [familia]	porque así nos dejó [Dios a] cada [familia]
458	ke's dho gu' <i>faltar</i> am je	aunque faltan

459	<i>la mayor parte</i>	la mayor parte [de la familia]
460	bix kat jup jum duñia'	que se tome en cuenta a todos
461	ojala ku bixkat jup jum duñia'	ojala que se tome en cuenta a todos
462	ojala ku bixkat jap dñlh pui' tu ja julhia'	ojala que les untes [remedio] a todos
463	Jiñ Chat, Jiñ Ñan	mi Padre, mi Madre
464	dhim mamar, jum su'mpulh	tus hijos, tus retoños
465	jix jiki' bhan jix a'lhim bhan	contento y con disposición, feliz
466	ja'pni <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tu a'gichu' ach	por esta cuenta estamos hablando
467	ja'pni <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tu a'gichu' oras bhan	por esta cuenta estamos hablando en este momento
468	ke' gu' mo cham aixkam bhan	aunque no muy elocuente
469	ke' gu' mo cham kabalkam bhan	no muy cabal
470	<i>todo</i> eso na mit ji'k pui' comensaru,	todo eso, los que comenzaron
471	<i>ese mensaje</i> dhi' na mit ji'k jum <i>condiciones</i> bhan	ese mensaje en todas las condiciones
472	alh ji'ma'ñ ñi'ok bhan	en unas cuantas palabras
473	kes dho gu' cham mop xi bhai' je nam jax dhui mop xi kai'chda' je dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	no saben como expresarlo, por una parte
474	ora ba' gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> up	ahora, también por otra parte
475	<i>pobres niños, pobre angelito</i> nam mi'p tu'i' <i>presente</i>	pobres niños, pobres angelitos que están aquí presentes
476	ma'n nam pui' narankasi'	uno que tiene naranjas
477	pui' bax koxi', pui' bax dui am, pui' bax yakua, pui' bax <i>refresco</i> am	que ya tiene cochiste, ya tiene ciruelas, ya tiene hongos, ya tienen refresco
478	pui' bax bhabho'mkoxi' am	ya tienen chichalotes
479	pui' bax chu'chu'p pi' am	ya tienen chichimocos
480	pui' bax bapsikki' am	ya tienen ratones
481	pui' bax kurukuich ' am	ya tienen <i>kurukuich</i>
482	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam	es por esta razón
483	dhi ba' pui' bax susrui am	ya tienen codornices
484	jir <i>pobres niños</i>	son pobres niños
485	ea ba' gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	así en una parte
486	na pui' ñokia' gu jaroi':	que así va a hablar alguien:
487	gu koxi'xio'pnadam Jich Chat	Nuestro Padre Nuestra Madre que chupa el koxiste
488	koxi' xio'pnadam Jich Ñan	que que chupa el koxiste
489	na jaroi' pui' pirik koxi' matim	el que sabe del koxiste de perico
490	babax koxi' matim	el que sabe del koxiste de "urraca"
491	dumalh nabdhix koxi' matim Jich chat	el que sabe del koxiste del gavilán, Nuestro Padre
492	gu jaakir koxi' matim Jich Chat	el que sabe del koxiste de aguililla, Nuestro Padre
493	jaakir koxi' matim Jich Ñan	la que sabe del koxiste de aguililla Nuestra Madre
494	gu pirik koxi' matim Jich Ñan	el que sabe del koxiste de perico Nuestro Padre
495	gu kakrax koxi' matim Jich Ñan	la que sabe del koxiste de guacamaya Nuestra Madre
496	dhi' na pim pui' tu jugioka' na ji'kia <i>frutas</i> ,	para que se coman todas las frutas
497	na pim pui' tu alegraru'	para que alegren
498	ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan	esa es la razón, en esta plegaria.
499	Dhi' ba' kabuimuk jach pui' xi ja bosgidhai	Mañana se los vamos a sacar (el koxiste)
500	<i>a las cinco, a las seis de la mañana</i>	a las cinco, a las seis de la mañana

501	na ba' pui' xi ja bosgidhai	para que así se los saque
502	dhi' ba' pui' jix jiki' bhan	así, contentos y con disposición
503	sia kugu' nai' mo jix chu oi'dhix	aunque sea que haya andado "jugando"
504	kes dho gu' nam diskulparu'	que se disculpe
505	sap mox chu oidhi'x ji	porque dice que ¡sí estuvo jugando!
506	miles veces, de <i>ocasiones</i> , sap mox chu oi'dhix	que miles de veces, de ocasiones, estuvo jugando
507	jix chu da'ngix	que anduvo agarrando
508	jix chu ma'yaxix bi jodai ki'n	está apedreado con piedras finitas
509	jix chu da'ngix, jix chu lokiarix	que anduvo agarrado, que estuvo jugueteado
510	jix chu chiñxidhix, jix chu kokmikix	estuvo besando, estuvo abrazando
511	dhi' nam ya' ba tum diskulparu	esto que aquí se disculpe
512	na gu' dhi' mi' ba' pui' ba ki'mpi dhim mamar,	porque eso ya lo limpiaron tus hijos
513	ja pe nap dñlh pui' ja ki'ñpiga' dhim mamar	limpia solo a tus hijos
514	dhim su'mpulhi'	a tus retoños
515	na cham mi'pai' bi'ixka' ma'n dam	que no se quede en alguno
516	ja pe nap dñlh pui' ja ki'mpiga	límpialos
517	na pim pui' tu jugioka' dhi <i>frutas</i> , dhi <i>naranja</i>	comanse todas las frutas, las naranjas
518	Na pim pui' ti' i'kia' na pim mi' ja icha' jix chamam ja kak'kaxchi bhan	que así corten [las frutas de los árboles] y lo pongan en cinco huacales
519	jix chamam <i>rejas</i> bhan na pim pui' tu icha'	en cinco rejas, que así lo empacaquen
520	dhi mango na cham mi' ja golpearca'	esos mangos para que no los golpee
521	na cham mi' ja lastimarda'	que no se lastimen
522	na cham ya' ja makda' <i>coraje</i>	que no les esté dando aquí coraje
523	na cham ja makda' sentirda'	que no les dé mal sentir
524	<i>porque</i> gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> nai' bax pasarix	porque por una parte ya está podrido
525	jai' bax dñibalh dhi karum	ya hay algunos plátanos podridos
526	jai' bax dñibalh dhi mansan	ya hay algunas manzanas podridas
527	jai' bax dñibalh dhi <i>peras</i> , dhi ibhai	ya hay algunas peras podridas, esas tunas
528	dhi' ba' mi' na cham mi' ja makda' <i>coraje</i>	así para que no les esté dando coraje
529	dñlh ja pim xi chu jugioka' Jiñ Chat	cómanse todo mi Padre
530	Jiñ Ñan ya' dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	Nuestra Madre, en esta plegaria.
531	Dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam, dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	Esta es la razón, por una parte
532	añ mo kaidha'	lo que estoy pidiendo
533	mo <i>sencillamente</i>	así sencillamente
534	sia cham aixkam	sin mucha elocuencia
535	cham <i>cabal</i> kam bhan	sin ser muy cabal
536	e gu' siñhkam ma'n bha ñokia' na jaroí' gu koxi' xio'pnadam Jich Chat	que en verdad hable Nuestro Padre el que chupa el cochiste
537	koxi' xio'pnadam Jich Ñan	Nuestra Madre la que chupa el koxiste
538	dhi' na pim pui' tu arreglaru',	para que lo arregle
539	añ nam pui'ñ chit'da nañ xib tñ jir <i>abogado</i>	a mí que me dijeron que hoy soy abogado
540	añ pui' jñ chiti' nañ tñ jir par'in	a mí que me dicen que soy padrino
541	añ pui' jix chit'da nañ mai' ja bui'ñchuldha' jñ'k <i>coraje</i> jñ'k sentirura'	a mí que me dijeron que les quite el coraje, la tristeza
542	ku nada <i>mas</i> añ pobremente cham pui' dukat ba' mop ti' nñ'n	así, nada más, pobremente yo lo estoy diciendo
543	cham jañ dha' gu <i>remedio</i>	no tengo el remedio en mis manos

544	cham jañ dha' gu tu' nañ pai' julhia'	no tengo el ungüento en mis manos.
545	<i>sólamente</i> gu api'ñ Jiñ Chat	sólamente ustedes mi Padre
546	<i>sólamente</i> gu api'm Jich Ñan	sólamente ustedes Nuestra Madre
547	nap tu ja julhia' dhim mamar	que untes a tus hijos
548	nam jix ki' pui'p jix xia'ñdhixka'	para que amanescan bien
549	nam jix ki' pui' juruñdhixka'	para que atardezcan bien
550	chamtu' ja pasaru'	que no les pase nada
551	cham tu' ja duñidha'	que no les suceda nada
552	nai' nam <i>cada</i> oi'dha'	así como viven cada uno
553	nai' nam pui'p tu gi'ñdhix <i>cada solaje</i>	así como están regados cada solaje
554	<i>cada paraje</i>	[en] cada paraje
555	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam	ésta es la razón
556	chamtu' ja pasaru' dhi <i>pobres hermanos, compañeros</i>	[que] nada les pase a estos pobres hermanos, compañeros
557	jix jiki' bhan, jix a'lhim bhan	contentos y con disposición, felices
558	ya'nich pui'p ka xi chi nii'ñ	así aquí seguimos viendo [el mundo]
559	sia kuch cham <i>todo el tiempo</i> jich papxiar	aunque no nos visitamos todo el tiempo
560	cham <i>todo</i> jich nii'ñ	no nos vemos todo
561	cham <i>todo el tiempo</i> jich <i>saludar</i>	no nos saludamos todo el tiempo
562	jæ' dho gu' dhi' pu'ñi jir jum dukam	esta es la razón
563	añ <i>parte</i>	yo por un lado
564	alh dhiñ jaduñ	[a] mis parientes
565	cham jañ dho gu' ja matit jia	no los conocía
566	<i>pero</i> gu' chich ya' bach conoseru	pero ya nos conocimos
567	ya' bach mamtiti chich jia	ya nos conocimos
568	nach pui' jirich jaja'nim	que somos parientes
569	dhi' <i>viene siendo con un sólo padre</i>	esto viene siendo con un sólo padre
570	<i>como que viene siendo con un sólo madre</i>	como que viene siendo con una sólo madre
571	dhi'ñi pu <i>cuenta</i> chich ya' bach mamtiti chich	por esta cuenta ya nos conocimos
572	bach conoseru chich	nos conocimos
573	dhi'chich ba' ya' ba tu a'ga por ja <i>cuenta</i>	por esto estamos hablando por su cuenta
574	añ alh <i>pobre</i> persona	yo pobre persona
575	eap tu ja julhmo pim, ja <i>considerar</i>	a ver úntales, considéralos
576	epim ja abogar	aboga por ellos
577	siapim ma tu ga'ra gu Dios gu i'mda'	aunque vendan el Dios i'mda'
578	gu ma'n tiempo, dhi gok, dhi baik, makob, jix chaman	una vez, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco
579	<i>miles de ocasiones</i>	miles de ocasiones
580	<i>presente</i> , ma tu prendiaru ,	presente, ya empeñó
581	oso kut ma ima gu Muki dagim	a lo mejor con el Muki' dagim
582	oso kut ma ima gu <i>calavera</i>	a lo mejor con la calavera
583	oso kut ma ima gu <i>chamuco</i>	a lo mejor con el chamuco
584	ba' pui' jir jum dukam, dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	esta es la razón, en esta parte.
585	Oso pu'ñi mam ikorai mit jia	O así ya se ensuciaron
586	ku ba' gu xi', ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	es por eso, en esta plegaria.
587	Na pich gu' pui' ya' Jich chibañ jiñ Chat je mo jia	Porque así nos bajaste aquí mi Padre

588	nach ya'ni mor jerrado	que aquí somos errados
589	moch ikora' da'	que aquí estamos sucios
590	na pich jax dhukat pui' jum du dho	y por esta razón, te pasó lo que te pasó
591	ap nap cham jir ꝥ kam jich chat	<i>ap nap cham jir ꝥ kam jich chat</i>
592	cham ja aichdhir kam jich ñan.	<i>Cham ja aichdhir kam jich ñan</i>
593	na pich gagam jia gu bho'mkox	que fuiste a buscar al <i>bho'mkox</i>
594	na pich gagam gu suimalh jia	que fuiste a buscar al venado, verdad
595	jaiñ na pich gu' mummu ji nam pai' oipo gu u'ub jia	ira que fuiste allá donde andan las mujeres
596	mi' pich dho bam ikorai,	ahí ya te ensuciaste
597	mi' pich dho ba jerraru pich	ahí ya erraste
598	cham ja pich dho aich dho, ¿jia?	ya no completaste ¿verdad?
599	mi' pich ba' jerraru	ahí ya erraste
600	dhi' pich ba' ya' xich buidhak dhi jam obra	y aquí nos dejaste tu obra
601	dhi jam <i>cantar</i> , dhi jam sasab <i>viene siendo</i>	su canto, su música viene siendo
602	pui' pup jich buim je ach nach jir jum mamar	así lo seguimos haciendo nosotros que somos tus hijos
603	na chich jum su'mpu, jum tajañi'	tus retoños, tu descendencia
604	pui' mam ikorat dho dhi'ñim mamar nai' pui'p tui'dhi'	así se ensuciaron estos tus hijos y así están ahora
605	xib ba' ya' tii soi' kai dha'	ahora está pidiendo humildemente
606	xidhutdara' bhan jum <i>disculpar</i>	se disculpa en el <i>xidhutdara'</i>
607	xidhutdara' bhan jam soi' kaidha	habla con humildad en el <i>xidhutdara'</i>
608	oso añ nañ pui' jir pa'rin	o yo que soy padrino
609	o <i>mejor</i> ja ñich <i>mas peor</i> kir ba ja iobo	o a lo mejor yo les hice más daño
610	ku ba' gu jix jiki' bhan	ahora contentos y con disposición
611	oso gu' pu'ñip dukat, gu ma'n <i>parte</i> .	a lo mejor por esta razón, por una parte.
612	<i>Todo eso, todos seamos fracasados</i>	Todo eso, todos hemos fracasados
613	cham jaroi' Dios ki'n kiki'	nadie es un Dios
614	todos somos prendiarkam Dios i'mda'	todos empeñamos el alma de Dios
615	e kuba' ma'n jix jiki' bhan pui'ch kaiñ	escúchanos contento y con disposición
616	e <i>mas bien</i> pui' jich konsiderariñ	más bien considéranos
617	cham ja e kam jich chat,	<i>cham ja e kam jich Chat</i>
618	cham ja e kam jich ñan,	<i>cham ja e kam jich Ñan.</i>
619	e ku <i>nos perdona</i>	mejor perdónenos
620	<i>Señor Jesucristo</i> map jum dagia' am	Señor Jesucristo únanse [con ellos]
621	nam pui' jich <i>atender</i> ap nach ya' tu a'ga <i>éste</i> <i>día, éste mañana</i>	para que nos atiendan [a los] que estamos hablando éste día, ésta mañana
622	ba' pui' jir jum dukam, dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	es por esta razón, en esta plegaria.
623	Na mi' pui'p kik	Que así está parado
624	na pui'p kik Jich Chat, Jich Ñan	que así estás parado Nuestro Padre, Nuestra Madre
625	na mi' pui'p kik na pui' jir Juktir	que así está parado donde es Santa María de Ocotán
626	na mi' pui'p kik ma'n Jich Chat	que así está parado Nuestro Padre
627	Santo la Purísima	Santo la Purísima
628	Santo San Juan y Padre San Juan Diego	Santo San Juan y Padre San Juan Diego
629	y Padre Santo San Francisco y Padre San Antonio	y Padre Santo San Francisco y Padre San Antonio

630	y Padre Santiago Caballero General	y Padre Santiago Caballero General
631	<i>que es infantería en todo el mundo</i>	que es infantería en todo el mundo
632	<i>en todo está</i> na pui' jich nii'ñ	en todo está cuidándonos
633	y Padre Santo Niño y Padre Santo Refugio	y Padre Santo Niño y Padre Santo Refugio
634	y Padre Santo San Miguel y Virgen de Candelaria	y Padre Santo San Miguel y Virgen de Candelaria
635	y Virgen Dolor	y Virgen de Dolores
636	Virgen Guadalupana, Señor Jesucristo	Virgen Guadalupana, Señor Jesucristo
637	pui' jix ñia <i>día y noche</i>	que puede ver día y noche
638	e pui' <i>todo el tiempo</i> pui' jich nii'ñ	que nos vé todo el tiempo
639	dhi' mi' <i>cada ocho, diez días</i> ja'k up xi gi' ma'n kandhir ki'n bhan	ese ahí cada ocho o diez días regresa con una vela
640	oso ma'n yooxi' ki'n bhan	o una flor
641	alhi'ch chikulat	con poquito chocolate
642	ki'n bhan dho gu' chi mui'p ti i'ki'ñ jia	con eso nos reparten (lo que pedimos)
643	<i>en que atender la vida, en que mantener la familia</i>	en que atender la vida, en que mantener la familia
644	ja'kup xi gi', ku <i>nada más</i> , jix bhai duiñxim	se regresó, nada más, bien hecho
645	bat'tixkam, ikoimdhixkam na alh puchu'm up xi tu tañia	bañado, lavado que así pida
646	tu' na pui' jiñ paltar, tu' nañ <i>necesitar</i> dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	lo que le haga falta, lo que necesite. Por una parte
647	Ea gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> .	en esta plegaria.
648	Bhan na pim pui' ayudaru'	Que le ayuden
649	mi' na pai' kik guch chat San Miguel	ahí donde está parado nuestro padre San Miguel
650	mi' na pai' pui' tim titi' Temohaya	ahí donde se dice Temohaya
651	mi' na pui' ja ayudaru' gu jum mamar	ahí que les ayude a tus hijos
652	jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	tus retoños, tu descendencia
653	oso na mi' puip ma'n alh chianarak kam guñ Soi'kam	o ahí que hay un Cristo de Santiago Teneraca
654	bhai' na pui' jir Koxbilhim	ahí donde es San Francisco de Ocotán
655	bhai' na pui' jir Juktir	ahí donde es Santa María de Ocotán
656	bhai' na pai' pui' tim titi' Huajicori pui'p kik gu virgen de la Candelaria	ahí donde se dice Huajicori también está parada la virgen de la Candelaria
657	<i>al dos de febrero</i> mi' na pui' a'ji'n gu <i>fiesta</i> ga'n,	al dos de febrero que le llega su fiesta
658	na pui' apoyaru'pim	para que la apoyen
659	oso na mi' pai' kik gu Santa Teresa	o ahí donde está parada Santa Teresa
660	oso na pai' kik gu Santo San Pedro	o ahí donde está parado el Santo San Pedro
661	oso na pai' kik dhi Huejuquilla del Alto	o ahí donde está parado Huejuquilla del Alto
662	dhi Plateros	ese Plateros
663	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam. nai' na pim pui tu gu'k jich dhudu' kam	es por esta razón. Así como están parados [en cada iglesia] los que están benditos
664	na pim ja atenderu' dhi'ñi jam mamar	que atiendan a sus hijos
665	dhi'ñi jam su'mpulh, tajañi	estos sus retoños, descendencia
666	sia ku gu' cham <i>todo el tiempo</i> jach jam paxiar	aunque no los visitemos todo el tiempo
667	siach cham <i>todo</i> jam <i>visitar</i>	aunque no los visitemos a todos
668	<b>J</b> <i>porque</i> na gu' cham xi jai'chka' alh ma'n kandhir	si porque a veces no hay una vela
669	ser cham ba' mop xi jai'chka' dhi ma'n <i>parte</i>	a veces no hay cera por una parte



670	dhi'ñi <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tu a'ntu' dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	por esta cuenta estamos avisando, en esta plegaria.
671	A ku gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> cham jai'chdhak pu'ñi ser	Por una parte no hubo cera,
672	jam sera' jich dhu'du'kam jich gi'kora'	su cera (sus velas) Nuestros Padres Benditos
673	mo dho mo mas escasiaru	se escaseó
674	cham sap ka xi jai'ch dhi mimib	que ya no hay mimib <i>mimib</i>
675	cham alh ka xi jai'ch ma'n alh dhi kakon mibat	ya no hay miel de El <i>kakon miba'</i>
676	cham up ka xi jai'ch ma'n alh panalhix	un panal, ya no hay el <i>panalhix</i>
677	oso pu'ñi ma'n di'boor cham up ka xi jai'ch alh	o un <i>di'boor</i> ya no hay
678	alh dhi' pui' <i>todo eso</i>	así todo eso
679	ma'n al kakon mibat cham up ka xi jai'ch je	miel de <i>kakon miba'</i> ya no hay
680	¿tu'ch ki'n jam paxiara'?	¿con qué los vamos a visitar?
681	¿tu'ch ki'n jup jam paxiar na cham jai'ch jia gu ser ya'?	¿con qué los vamos a visitar si aquí no hay cera?
682	ku ba' gu' xib oras bhan	pero ahora en este momento
683	mas escasiaru mit cham mat ich nat tu' ma ja du gu sasoigan Jich Chat	se escaseó y no sabemos que les pasó a los animales de Nuestro Padre
684	sasoiga'n up Jich Ñan	animales de Nuestra Madre
685	oso komoker ja chich dilh ma tu ga'ra jix dha'rvat ja mibat bhan	o a lomejor nosotros vendimos cara su miel
686	ya' jix dha'rvat ja serat bhan	o vendimos cara su cera
687	mi' dho gu' ma'n <i>parte</i> nañ xi chi nii'ñ	esto, por una parte, lo que estoy viendo
688	mo jix dha'ra' a' am	que están caros
689	ma'n <i>kilo</i> dho gu' mo <i>doscientos</i>	un kilo cuesta doscientos [pesos]
690	jai'ñ ñach gu'jix dha'ra pix ji ga'rat jia	mira como estamos vendiendo caro
691	uu' ap chamtu' jich ga'li'i'ñ ap Jich Chat, ¿jia?	tu nada nos vendes Nuestro Padre, ¿verdad?
692	bha ja jotos ap pui' nach ba' ya'ni pui' jam makda' <i>mano</i>	los mandas gratis para que nosotros aquí les demos la mano
693	jam makda' ich <i>servicio</i>	les demos servicio [a ustedes]
694	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi <i>todo eso</i> nañ ya' tii tu a'gichu' dhi oras bhan	es por esta razón, todo eso que estoy hablando, en este momento
695	pui'ñ ba' tii tu a'gichu' dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	así trato de hablar, por una parte.
696	E ba' dhi'ñi na ya'p tu'i' <i>presente</i>	A ver éste que ya está aquí presente
697	nap pui' tu juanidha'	que así vas trabajando
698	na pui' jai'ch <i>tiempo</i>	que así hay tiempo
699	nam pui' arreglaru' jich dhukam ja <i>barbechos</i> bhan	para que arregles en nuestros sagrados barbechos
700	jich dhuka' ja moimka'n bhan	en nuestra sagrada tierra removida
701	nam ba' pui' ja ixia' ji'ma'n bhan	para que así siembren en estos
702	na pai'dhuk bhan бага' gu Ángel del Cielo	cuando riegue el Ángel del Cielo
703	na ba' gu' gu <i>suerte</i> bia'ka' am <i>suerte</i> nam pui' ti ixia'	para que tengan suerte cuando siembren
704	pu'ñi alh ma'n bhab,	así un frijol
705	oso ma'n jun, oso ma'n <i>patoles</i> , jix a'oi' gu bhab, jix chotoi gu bhab, jix bhipi' gu bhab	un maíz, unos patoles, frijoles pintos, frijoles bayos, frijoles rojos
706	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam nam bia'ka' <i>suerte</i> dhi'ñim mamar	esta es la razón, para que tengan suerte éstos tus hijos
707	dhi'ñi jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	tus retoños, tu descendencia
708	nam ya'p jup tui'dhi' <i>presente</i>	que aquí están presentes

709	oso'm bia' nam ya' pui' tu darsai pu'ñi alh tu' turasnu, oso pu'ñi mansan, oso pu'ñi ma'n i'gok,	o a lo mejor tienen duraznos, manzana, maguey para sembrar
710	oso pu'ñi ma'n na ji'kia pu'ñi jup tu buan <i>este lugar</i>	o así todo cuanto crece en este lugar
711	na ji'kia pu'ñi jup tu buan <i>este lugar, este mundo</i>	todo lo que crece en este lugar, este mundo
712	na pu'ñi jix tajañiska'	que así haya descendencia
713	pui' ampix tu igis yooxga'n, ampix pu igis gu alhi'ch ibhai ga'n	así nada mas se caen sus flores, se caen los pequeños frutos
714	na ja pe nap jich ayudaru' jich dhudu'kam, jich gi'kora'	ayúdenos nuestros padres benditos
715	ja pe na tajañiska', rendirixka', dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	que haya descendencia, que rinda, en esta plegaria.
716	Ma'n i'gok na mo alhi'ch jir jich ñan	Un maguey que es nuestra pequeña madre
717	nach pui' ba kolhbixdha' ba' pui' ma i'ya' alhi'ch i'gok ga'n	para así hacerle un cuenco y así tomar poquita de su miel
718	nach pui' titi' nar i'gok, pui' titi' ich nar i'gok miba'	que así le decimos, decimos que es miel de maguey
719	jaiñ na gu' cham ka xi jai'ch je, gakim jia.	mira que ya casi no hay, se está secando
720	<i>Ah que mano, man' parte</i> bhan.	Ah que mano, en esta plegaria.
721	Dhi'ñi pu <i>cuenta</i> moch ti mui' tu da'ñchu', dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	Por esta cuenta estamos luchando, en esta plegaria.
722	Na pim ba'ch ayudaru' mi' na pai' kik gu <i>Cerro Alacrán</i>	Para que nos ayuden ahí donde está parado el Cerro Alacrán
723	na pim pui' ti ni'i'ñ dhi <i>los cuatro puntos</i>	que ven los cuatro puntos
724	<i>de los cuatro cardinales</i> na pim pui' ti ni'i'ñ	de los cuatro cardinales que ven
725	dilh ja pim ja considerarui dhi jam mamar, su'mpulh jam tajañi'	considéren a sus hijos, sus retoños, su descendencia
726	nam ya'ni jix ki' pui'p jix xia'ñdhixka'	para que aquí vayan amaneciendo sanos
727	jix juruñdhixka', dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan.	que vayan atardeciendo, en esta plegaria.
728	Mi' ba' pui'x mati' gu Jix o' jich dhukam Jich Chat	Ahí esta presente Nuestro Padre bendito todo poderoso
729	Jix o' jix dhukam Jich Ñan	Nuestra Madre bedita, todo poderosa
730	na pim dilh pui' ja sispai tu ja julhia'	que así los sostengan, les unten
731	Jiñ Chat, Jiñ Ñan	mi Padre, mi Madre
732	dhi jam mamar, dhim su'mpi'	a sus hijos, sus retoños
733	nam jix ki' pui'p jix xia'ñdhixka'	que estén amaneciendo sanos
734	jix ki'p ji juruñdhixka' ja bo dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	que estén atardeciendo sanos, así por una parte.
735	<i>Porque</i> maxik nach ti ni'i'ñ nax chu abhar	Porque vemos en la realidad que está bonito
736	joidham jix chu abhar dhich jujuki'	están muy bonitos nuestros pinos
737	joidham jix abhar tutuaji'	están muy bonitos nuestros encinos
738	bha'ñi ja'p dhi a'aki'n, bha'ñi joidham jix chu abhar gu yooxi' u'ba je na pui' tu yot	por ahí los arroyos, ahí están bonitas las flores, que así florecen
739	pu'ñi pusulh yooxi' je, oso dhi baapkur yooxi'	así las flores de mayo o las flores baapkur
740	joidham jix chu abhar oso bha'ñi ja'p gagai	está muy bonito, por ahí por las laderas
741	joidham jix chu abhar maxik nach pui' xi chi ni'i'ñ	está muy bonito que estamos viéndolo realmente
742	<i>por eso</i> nach pui' xi bua't, pui' xi kudarut dhi Dios tu i'mda'	por eso cuidemos el alma de Dios
743	ku <i>nada más</i> nach gu' komoker jach ma prendiaru', ma ga'ra' ich je gu i'mda' ga'n	nada mas que como quiera empeñamos, vendémos el alma

744	nach pui'ch a'nda' je nach dilh i'mda' jich mak	porque pensamos que nosotros mismos nos damos el alma
745	<i>no es cierto, la vida es ajeno, la vida es prestada</i>	no es cierto, la vida es ajeno, la vida es prestada
746	<i>la vida es</i> jix chaiñbuidhix dhi' nat ya' jich dho'ñcho, ma'n <i>parte</i>	la vida es prestada por éste que nos dejó aquí, una parte.
747	Gu' ba' gu' dhi' ma'n <i>parte</i> guñ jaduñ jam ya' pui'p tui'dhi'	Por otra parte mis familiares que están aquí presentes
748	cha'pim ba' pui' xi dhukat na pim,	entonces no la hagan así
749	cha'pim prender dat dhi jam i'mda'	no empeñen su alma
750	<i>porque</i> mo jix dha'ra' je	porque está cara
751	jix dha'ra' dhi i'mda' no'ñ nai' pui' prender	está cara si la empeño
752	no'ñ nai' pui' tu ga'ra	si la vendo
753	jix jiki' bhan , jix a'lhim bhan.	así contento, con disposición.
754	Cha'pim jax jum agat <i>pobre hermanos, compañeros</i>	No se preocupen pobres hermanos, compañeros
755	Cha'pim ku' jimmit,	No retrocedan,
756	cha'pim cham bhai' xi kai'chit	háblense bien
757	na pim jam mamar, jam su'mpu', jam tajañi' <i>cada su familia</i>	que son sus hijos, sus retoños, desdencencia cada familia
758	dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> .	en esta plegaria.
759	Dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> . Dhi' ja'pane <i>cuenta</i> ba' mo tu a'gichu'	Por una parte. Así esta cuenta de la que estamos hablando
760	mo cham aixkam bo, cham kabalkam bhan	sin mucha elocuencia, no muy cabal
761	añ jiñ <i>parte</i> , mi' pix ja'p bhii <i>camino ancho, camino perdición</i>	yo por mi parte me fui al camino ancho, al camino de la perdición
762	mi' pui' xi agarruk jañich ma'n <i>copa</i> ma tu prendiaru Dios i'mda'	así agarré una copa, empeñé el alma de Dios
763	ba' pui' jir jum dukam y <i>todo eso</i> nañ ba' pui' ti mai ba kaidha'	es por esa razón y todo eso lo que estoy pidiendo
764	Mo cham jix chu bhai' nach mo ti mai ti nñi'ñ	No hay espacio aunque estamos tratado de ver
765	ea guñ ma'n <i>parte</i> bhan, na tu ñokia'	en esta plegaria, que hable
766	Na pui' kik gu José Ángel bhai' na pui' tim titi' Charcos	que así está parado José Ángel ahí donde se llama Charcos
767	Tiron chio'ñ bhai' ba ñokia', na bhai' pui' ba tirnia', na pim bhai' tu бага' pim	Tiron chio'ñ que ahí habla, que ahí truena, para que rieguen
768	Urich mo ba ji tanok ja chich, mo chich ma ji bhio'mo	ya empezamos a tener sed, ya empezamos a tener hambre
769	ma tanoka gum sasoi' jia	ya empezaron a tener sed tus animales
770	bha'ñi ja'p dhi u'xchirkam jum sasoi':	Tus animales domésticos:
771	ma'n bho'mkox, ma'n suimalh, ma'n toba	un techalote, un venado, un guajotole
772	uri jix chanok am jia, nat pui' ji chu gakii	tienen sed, que ya se secó
773	mija'p na pai' jir bipiatam ji, na pim ba' jux jiki' bhan	por ahí donde hay ojos de agua para qe contentos y con disposición
774	pui' pim xim diko'nda' jix dhudu' kam, Jich Gi'kora'	así hagan un esfuerzo Nuestros Padres benditos
775	na pim ba' bapmi'ñdha' dhix chamam oi'dha' ta'm bhan	para que levanten en las cinco montañas
776	pui' bapi'ñdha' pim dhi jikom	así levanten la neblina
777	dhi tiba', dhix chamam alagunes bhan	las nubes, en cinco lagunas
778	dhix chamam mares bhan, dhi ma'n parte	en cinco mares, por una parte

779	dhi'ñi ba' pu <i>cuenta</i> jach ba' mo tu a'ga	es por esta cuenta que estamos hablando
780	ke gu cham aixkam bhan	aunque no con mucha elocuencia
781	ora bhai' alh na pai' up mati' dhi'm ba' k'i'n tu tan	ahora ahí donde está presente, es con eso con lo que están pidiendo
782	bha'ñi jam pui' jup tu'i' <i>presente</i> gu jam tìmaich	ahí están presente tus tamales
783	alhi'ch chikulat bhan	un poquito chocolate
784	dhi' tu tan am k'i'n gu sudai', tii alh tu tan am	con eso piden el agua, aún así piden
785	na mit gu' alh ma ji tanokamit dhim mamar	porque ya empezaron a tener sed tus hijos
786	nam ya'p tui'dhi' <i>presente</i>	que están aquí presentes
787	nai'm alh tii tì nii'ñ	están viendo para todos lados
788	Muja'p jam tii jimda' a'ki'n nam alh tii tu gagidha' gu sudai'	por allá andan en los arroyos buscando agua
789	gu' pap bhiya' na gu' ampix tu ju'	pero de dónde van a agarrar si no hay
790	diatiru jix chu gak jia nach xi chi nii'ñ	está todo seco de a tiro que vemos a todos lados
791	e pim jich ayudaru' pim Jich Gi'kora'	A ver ayúdenos Nuestros Padres
792	ba' pui' jir jum dukam jix jiki' bhan	es por esta razón, contentos y con disposición
793	bhai' pui' tu mandaru	que así mandes
794	bha' pui' bapsa' dhi <i>tubos</i>	que se metan tubos
795	jum aseru' gu <i>pila</i>	se haga la pila
796	na bhai' jum consenraridha' gu sudai'	que ahí se vaya concentrando el agua
797	Nach k'i'n ya'ni ba i'ya'	Para que aquí tomémos
798	jix bhai' tu ta'da' je no chich ba i gu sudai'	se siente bien cuando ya tomamos agua
799	no'ñ jiñ sab jap tu ta'da' nañ <i>quisiera</i> nañ sudai' ba i'ya'	cundo estoy ayunando quisiera ya tomar agua
800	dho gu' dhi' jix chanok am dhim mamar nam ya' jup tu'i' am	Pues tus hijos que están aquí tienen sed
801	nai' alh tii tì nii'ñ am alh	ven a todos lados
802	¿pam ja'k i'po' gu sudai'?	¿a dónde van a ir a tomar agua?
803	na gu' cham jai'ch jia	porque no hay
804	dhi' alh ba' <i>todo eso</i> jañ ya' ja tañxi'ñ	esto todo eso, es lo que aquí les estoy pidiendo
805	<i>todo general</i> nam ji'k ya' pui' tui'dhi'	todo general [para] los que están aquí
806	dhim mamar, jum su'mpulh, jum tajañi'	tus hijos, tus retoños, tu descendencia
807	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam dhi ma'n <i>parte</i> cham ixkam	este es el por qué de esta plegaria, sin elocuencia
808	ke' ba' gu' cham aixkam, cham kabalkam ka'	sin elocuencia, no muy cabal
809	añ mo jup jir <i>menas</i> ji cham bhan jiñ <i>agarrar</i> nañ jax dhukat tii pui'p kaidha'	yo soy poco, no hablo tanto
810	<i>disculpeme, perdóneme</i> Jiñ Chat, Jiñ Ñan.	disculpeme, perdonenme mi Padre, mi Madre.
811	<i>entiéndame, compréndame lo que estamos diciendo éste día, éste mañana</i>	entiéndame, compréndame lo que estamos diciendo éste día, éste mañana
812	e kuba' ma'n jix jiki' bhan	contentos y con disposición
813	kuba' gu' nach bhai' pui'p bach b'i'ñxi dhix juk ja i'mda' bhan	porque así nos alumbró jix en el juk ja i'mda'
814	jix juk ja tanara' bhan	aquí [en la tierra] que está sucio
815	pui' ka xi boxki, <i>que alcabo</i>	así barrelo, que al cabo
816	dhi' ja'pni up tui'ka'	que esto así se quede
817	dho gu' cham kaidha'	pues no se escucha

818	cham mui' <i>palabras necesitar una cosa cierta</i>	no se necesitan muchas palabras para una cosa cierta
819	sap gu tu' silhkam	que algo verdadero
820	dho gu' dhi'ñ mi pu iatda' je	pues así puedo estar mintiéndoles
821	ya'pix pu jurnia' je, ya' pix pu tu'kgia'	y se va a hacer tarde, y se va a hacer noche.
822	dho gu' dhi' na gu' jaxbui' <i>palabras</i> bhan	esto nada más con estas palabras
823	<i>porque</i> na ba tu gagidha' am.	porque ya van a buscar
824	jaiñ no'ñ ya' pu ja daras	mira que sí los tengo aquí sentados
825	jJaiñ na gu' ya' jum agidha' dam duk gu timkalh jia	mira porque aquí se van a necesitar tortillas a medio día.
826	no' dai añ ya' ja darsat ya' ja iatgi'ñ jia	si yo nada más los tengo aquí sentados mintiéndoles
827	oso jañ dai ya' jix buam kai'ch dai ya' ji dakat	o digo puras cosas feas aquí sentado
828	ja pe na gu' ma'n <i>palabra</i> , ma'n jum nesitar gu silhkam <i>cosa cierto</i>	pero una palabra, una se necesita para una cosa cierta
829	dhi' ba' pui' jir jum dukam.	es por esta razón.
830	Ja'pni tui'ka' dhi ma'n	Así va a estar una
831	dhi gok, dhi baik, dhi makob, dhix chamam <i>palabras</i> ,	dos, tres, estas cinco palabras,
832	ñiokidha' bhan pix ka dho'ñchixka' mo	Se va a quedar por ahora.
833	<i>Por la señal de la santa cruz de nuestros enemigos, espíritu santo. Amén.</i>	Por la señal de la santa cruz de nuestros enemigos, espíritu santo. Amén.

## APPENDIX 3 GLOSSARY

<b>Ak bahjakup</b>	Hello', a particular way of greeting while people are in a retreat.
<b>Atuulh</b>	Or <i>atole</i> , a hot thick beverage made mixing flour (corn or wheat) with sugar and hot water.
<b>Au'dam</b>	South-western Tepehuan people or language.
<b>Babok</b>	A racoon.
<b>Babokta'm</b>	The Racoon's Place.
<b>Baimilh</b>	Or <i>baimalh</i> , <i>Xiotalh</i> leader in the community of Santiago Teneraca, equivalent to <i>umuagim</i> in other communities.
<b>Baisi'ndam</b>	A healer specialised on bringing people back to home when they are far away.
<b>Bakirux</b>	A cowboy who is responsible for the church's or saints' calves.
<b>Barmillón</b>	A resin of the colour vermilion.
<b>Basik ta'm</b>	The Mice's Place.
<b>Bastimento</b>	A bag of food to take a way as a soul's provisions on their way to haven.
<b>Bha'aa'</b>	A golden eagle.
<b>Bhabho'mkox</b>	Plural for <i>bho'mkox</i> .
<b>Bho'mkox</b>	A grey squirrel ( <i>Sciurus aureogaster</i> ).
<b>Bho'mkoxcha'm</b>	The Grey Squirrel's Place.
<b>Biñ</b>	Wine.
<b>Biñak</b>	One's arrow of life.
<b>Bipi'ñak</b>	Plural of <i>biñak</i> .
<b>Boik</b>	Dehydrated corn kernels.
<b>Bopto'</b>	A bed or ceremonial altar.
<b>Buraa'</b>	A healer's ceremonial woven band to be worn around the head.
<b>Cha'anaka</b>	A ceremonial Cora cross representing the world ( <i>quincunx</i> ). In Huichol, <i>tsikiri</i> .
<b>Chameet</b>	The Place of Death.
<b>Chamoïi'kam</b>	A deity associated with the Evening Star; literally 'the one who failed'.
<b>Charro</b>	A mestizo horseman.
<b>Chayote</b>	A type of fruit ( <i>Sechium edule</i> ).
<b>Chianarak</b>	People (singular) from Chianarkam.
<b>Chianarkam</b>	The O'dam place-name for Santiago Teneraca.
<b>Chiatnakark</b>	Plural for <i>Chianarak</i> , people from Chianarkam.
<b>Chilacayote</b>	A type of fruit ( <i>Cucurbita ficifolia</i> ).
<b>Chu'ulh</b>	An ancestral cannibal character identified with the forces of the Mother Earth.
<b>Chu'ulh tuk</b>	The Chu'ulh's Place.
<b>Cofradía</b>	A guild or brotherhood.
<b>Cofrate(s)</b>	Guild or brotherhood members.

<b>Compadrazgo</b>	Co-parenthood; a ritual kinship relationship based on sponsorship of a child.
<b>Compadre/comadre</b>	A party of <i>compadrazgo</i> , also a term of address.
<b>Comunero</b>	A community member.
<b>Comunidad</b>	A community or collective landholding unit originally titled to Indians in the colonial period and recognised in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century by the Mexican state.
<b>Costumbre, el</b>	Indigenous traditional ceremonies.
<b>Daañi'</b>	The name for the <i>xiotalh</i> ceremony used by people from San Francisco de Ocotán.
<b>Dagiasda'm</b>	A healer; the ones who know how to 'push the navel down'.
<b>Dagim</b>	A type of ancestor, the 'lord' or the 'lady' of ____; i.e., Muki dagim: The Lord of the Dead.
<b>Dar parte</b>	A prayer pronounced by the healers and the <i>xiotalh</i> leaders in the ceremonies; literally 'the dispatch'.
<b>Dar valor</b>	To encourage
<b>Diligencias</b>	A soul's preliminary banishment ceremony, ideally perform six months after a death; literally 'diligence'.
<b>Diputado</b>	One of the mayordomo's helper.
<b>Doi'</b>	A prefix meaning 'tender' or 'not ready'.
<b>Duñiipia'kam</b>	The mayordomo; a church festival sponsor.
<b>Elote</b>	Corn on the cob.
<b>Fiestero</b>	The mayordomo; a church festival sponsor.
<b>Garabat</b>	A type of disease in which men bleed through the penis.
<b>Gik</b>	A planting stick.
<b>Gε' makgim</b>	A type of healer; literally 'the greatest healer'.
<b>lagit</b>	Feathered sticks, which represent the tutelary ancestors in the <i>xiotalh</i> patios.
<b>likob</b>	A type of yucca.
<b>li'mda'</b>	The soul, vital force, or breath.
<b>ihdha'</b>	Intelligence.
<b>Ja'ook</b>	The devil
<b>Jich chat</b>	Our father.
<b>Jich gi'kora'</b>	Our ancestors.
<b>Jich naan</b>	Or <i>jich ñan</i> , our mother
<b>Jich Oo</b>	Our powerful father.
<b>Jich Xoi'kam</b>	Jesus Christ.
<b>Jigiarum</b>	The animals of the forest.
<b>Jiib</b>	A beverage made from toasted grain-corn dissolved in water.
<b>Jikuañi'</b>	A type of disease in which people do not feel hunger and suffer from diarrhoea.
<b>Jilote</b>	Baby corn.
<b>Jinch xiix</b>	Our elder brother.
<b>Jir Karax cha'm</b>	A sacred hill in Kauxbilhim; unknown meaning.

<b>Jirdaika</b>	The formal beginning of the <i>xiotalh</i> , indicated by lighting of the sacred fire.
<b>Jix bhuam matim</b>	Witches or wizards.
<b>Jix bigiom jun</b>	Pink corn.
<b>Jix bipgiom</b>	A type of disease in which people suffer from fever and pain in the bones; literally 'pink'.
<b>Jix chiido' jun</b>	Or <i>titdujun</i> , blue corn.
<b>Jix choiñ kokdai'</b>	A type of disease in which people stop eating and suffer from stomach aches; literally 'hot illness'.
<b>Jix chooto jun</b>	White corn.
<b>Jix jip u'uu</b>	A type of arrow used in the soul's banishment ceremony; literally 'cold arrow'.
<b>Jix kai'</b>	The governor.
<b>Jix kai' chio'ñ</b>	A deity or cultural hero associated with the Morning Star and Archangel Saint Michael.
<b>Jix oo'dagim</b>	Main male <i>xiotalh</i> leader; literally 'the powerful lord'.
<b>Jix tabnalh jun</b>	Or <i>jix a'oi jun</i> or <i>jix tatabñilh</i> , spotted corn.
<b>Jix uam jun</b>	Yellow corn.
<b>Jootos</b>	The soul's banishment ceremony.
<b>Jotkox</b>	Onion.
<b>Jotkoxcha'm ta'm</b>	The Onion's Place.
<b>Jot'sadam</b>	A healer specialized in the soul's banishment ceremony.
<b>Jujukterik</b>	Plural for Jukterik, people from Juktir.
<b>Jukgam</b>	High lands; a place with pine trees.
<b>Jukterik</b>	People (singular) from Juktir.
<b>Juktir</b>	The O'dam place-name for Santa María de Ocotán.
<b>Jun</b>	Maize.
<b>Junbaa'</b>	Corn cobs.
<b>Junma'n</b>	A stew made of corn dough and meat, usually deer or squirrel meat.
<b>Jurunip kam jinch xix</b>	Our elder brother from the west.
<b>Kakoi'</b>	A tortured soul.
<b>Kakoi' batiaa</b>	A place-name; literally 'the soul's bath'.
<b>Kapalio</b>	Ceremonial foodstuff; toasted corn flour balls.
<b>Kauxbilhim</b>	Au'dam place-name for San Francisco de Ocotán, or Koxbilhim in O'dam.
<b>Kaxio</b>	A fox.
<b>Kaxio ta'm</b>	The Fox's Place.
<b>Kib</b>	Ice or snow.
<b>Kiikam</b>	The main male kinship <i>xiotalh</i> leader; literally 'the one standing up'.
<b>Kobiamkar</b>	Clay incense burner.
<b>Kokda' jurnip kam</b>	The Place of Western Sickness.
<b>Kokkoi'</b>	Tortured souls.
<b>Komaalh</b>	<i>Comadre</i> (female); a party to <i>compadrazgo</i> .
<b>Kompaalh</b>	<i>Compadre</i> (male); a party to <i>compadrazgo</i> .
<b>Kookda'</b>	Sickness.



<b>Kopal</b>	A type of incense.
<b>Koxi</b>	A type of disease in which the main symptom is sleepiness.
<b>Koxpi'ndam or koxi' matim</b>	A type of healer capable of curing <i>koxi</i> ; literally 'sleepiness knower'.
<b>Kusap</b>	A flat bread made from freshly ground corn kernels toasted in maize leaves.
<b>Mai</b>	Agave or century plant.
<b>Mai baraa'</b>	Agave water.
<b>Mai' bua bak</b>	A celebration on the <i>xiotalh</i> patio to bless the baby corn.
<b>Maikak</b>	Raw sugar.
<b>Makgim</b>	Or <i>makgam</i> or <i>dam dum</i> , a healer.
<b>Mam' kaya</b>	Or <i>mamkixu</i> , a healer's paraphernalia.
<b>Mamadam gu mai</b>	Male <i>xiotalh</i> leader; literally 'agave roaster'.
<b>Mamkagim</b>	The plural of <i>makgim</i> , healers.
<b>Mamkixu</b>	Or <i>mam' kaya</i> , healers' paraphernalia.
<b>Mandante</b>	Main traditional church authority in Juktir; literally 'ruler'.
<b>Mara'akame</b>	A Huichol priest-healer.
<b>Mariin</b>	Godmother.
<b>Maseca</b>	Industrialised corn flour.
<b>Matachin(es)</b>	Church dancers.
<b>Mattur</b>	A stone grinder.
<b>Mayordomo (a)</b>	Church festival sponsor.
<b>Mexicanero</b>	Náhuatl speakers.
<b>Mezcal</b>	Agave plant or agave liquor.
<b>Mitote</b>	Or <i>xiotalh</i> , agricultural ceremony.
<b>Mobatak</b>	The name of an ancestor, or a <i>xiotalh</i> tutelary deity.
<b>Mukax</b>	A feathered hat used in the <i>xiotalh</i> .
<b>Muki dagim</b>	The Lord of the Dead.
<b>Nabaitch</b>	A ceremonial beverage contained in a clay pot prepared with water, agave roasted leafs, and yucca.
<b>Nakaab tam</b>	The O'dam Place-name for San José de Xoconoxtle.
<b>Naksir tam</b>	The Scorpion Hill.
<b>Nayeri</b>	Cora people.
<b>Nii'kartam</b>	<i>Xiotalh</i> ceremonial centres or patios; literally 'place to dance'.
<b>Nini'dam</b>	Dancers.
<b>Nixtamal</b>	Corn grains cooked with lime powder, used to prepare corn dough.
<b>Noonob</b>	One type of healer's ceremonial feathered sticks; literally 'hands'.
<b>Nopal</b>	A type of edible cactus (Cactacea <i>Opuntia</i> ).
<b>Notaxte</b>	Or <i>jix oo'dagim</i> , the main <i>xiotalh</i> ceremonial (male) leader.
<b>O'dam</b>	Sothorn Tepehuan people or language.
<b>Ódami</b>	Northern Tepehuan people or language.

<b>Odhargan</b>	The post-liminal stage after any ceremony; the time required for gradual reincorporation into social life.
<b>Oikam</b>	The name of an ancestor or <i>xiotalh's</i> tutelary deity.
<b>Oiridam kokdai'</b>	Type of disease characterised by the repulsion to food.
<b>Onam</b>	Or <i>unam</i> , a shelter made with foliage used during retreats.
<b>Padrino</b>	Godfather.
<b>Pa'riin</b>	Godfather.
<b>Penado</b>	A tortured spirit.
<b>Pitayo</b>	A type of cactus ( <i>Stenocereus queretaroensis</i> ).
<b>Pixkalh</b>	Or <i>fiscal</i> , sacristan.
<b>Pixnate</b>	Toasted ground maize water.
<b>Prioste</b>	Provost, a type of <i>mayordomo</i> or festival sponsor.
<b>Sakom</b>	A votive arrow.
<b>Santur tam</b>	All Saints Day's and Day of the Dead, from Latin <i>santorum</i> .
<b>Sapook</b>	A story or mythological account.
<b>Sayo</b>	A <i>mayordomo</i> or any cargo holder successor.
<b>Señores</b>	The elders
<b>Sihuacora</b>	Or Sibkulhim, a place at the Mezquital River's bank.
<b>Si'lhik</b>	A ceremonial headband of woven palm leaves.
<b>Silñadam</b>	A type of healer; bone-setter.
<b>Sobardam</b>	Midwife.
<b>Soi'</b>	Domestic animals, plural <i>sosoi'</i> .
<b>Sokbolh</b>	A <i>xiotalh</i> musician; bow player.
<b>Sosokbolh</b>	Plural for <i>sokbolh</i> .
<b>Soyate</b>	A type of palm ( <i>Brahea dulcis</i> ).
<b>Sudi' matim</b>	A type of healer; literally 'water knower'.
<b>Suimalh</b>	A deer.
<b>Susbanta'm</b>	The Place of Toads.
<b>Susto</b>	A type of disease; literally 'fear'.
<b>Taatsba</b>	Low lands.
<b>Tabagkam xiotalh</b>	The <i>xiotalh</i> celebrated in the dry season, prior to the rainy season.
<b>Tamog' kam xiotalh</b>	The <i>xiotalh</i> celebrated in the rainy season, prior to harvest.
<b>Tanolh</b>	The sun
<b>Timaich</b>	Or <i>tamal</i> , corn dough bread simmered in hot water.
<b>Timkalh</b>	Corn tortilla.
<b>Tititnip</b>	Plural for <i>titnip</i> .
<b>Titmaich</b>	Plural for <i>timaich</i> .
<b>Titmokar ta'm</b>	A sacred hill in Kauxbilhim; unknown meaning.
<b>Titnip</b>	Baby corn.
<b>Tobaa tam</b>	The Turkey's Place.
<b>Tobia'lhik</b>	A type of devil.
<b>Tobia'lhik</b>	A type of spirit, the personification of illness.
<b>Toecinte</b>	Corn's wild plant ancestor.

<b>Tua'dam</b>	The <i>xiotalh</i> female ceremonial leader.
<b>Tuimix</b>	A maize worm.
<b>Tuisap</b>	A flour made from toasted ground corn.
<b>Tupil</b>	The church's assistant.
<b>Tə't ɛb totnam</b>	The giants; literally 'long feet'.
<b>U'uu</b>	An arrow.
<b>Uakta'm</b>	The Hawk's Place.
<b>Uañdha'</b>	To supplicate by praying.
<b>Umuagim</b>	A <i>xiotalh</i> male ceremonial leader.
<b>Varas de mando</b>	The ribboned wooden staffs, literally the 'staffs of authority'.
<b>Wixaritari</b>	Huichol people.
<b>Xaturi Xumpe</b>	The Huichol word for 'The Blue Mestizo'.
<b>Xialip kam jinch xiix</b>	Our elder brother from the east.
<b>Xibkam duñiipia'kam</b>	The new mayordomos.
<b>Xidhutdara'</b>	A sacred place.
<b>Xidhuukam</b>	Blessed or sacred.
<b>Xiiban</b>	Hello.
<b>Xiotalh</b>	A set of agricultural seasonal ceremonies.
<b>Xiu'lh dhakar</b>	A sacred hill in Kauxbilhim; unknown meaning.
<b>Xixio' dada'</b>	A sacred hill in Kauxbilhim; unknown meaning.
<b>Yatuicha'm</b>	The Potatoes' Place.
<b>Yooxi</b>	Flower.
<b>Yooxi jurnip kam</b>	The Place of Western Flowers.
<b>Yooxi' mīidha'</b>	A type of disease; literally 'the burning flower'.